

December, 1939

The **Liguorian**



Mary's Story of Christmas
C. D. McEnniry

•

Versions of Christmas
D. F. Miller

•

The Dangerous Cross (Story)
E. F. Miller

•

Carols for Christmas
F. A. Brunner

Box A, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

Per Year \$1.00

Canada and Foreign \$1.25

Single Copies 10c

AMONGST OURSELVES

Here is a recipe for a fruitful Advent as a preparation for a happy Christmas:

Read no secular newspapers or magazines. (We mean it!)

Go to Mass every morning and read the Mass from the Missal as you attend. Of course, receive Communion.

Walk downtown for half an hour each day and watch the tired, despairing, worried, anxious, haunted, futile expressions on the faces of the people you see passing by, and pray for them in your heart as you walk along.

Read the life of a saint for half an hour every day (you will make it longer as you get used to it) and spend fifteen minutes with the Gospels or the Imitation of Christ or a book of meditations.

Seek out a group or an organization that is preparing Christmas baskets for the needy and offer your help or your contribution.

If you play the piano, or if someone else in your family plays, learn a new Christmas hymn every week and sing it whenever you feel like singing.

Say the rosary every day, meditating on the joyful mysteries, and make at least one visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Do your Christmas shopping with the Christchild in mind as the recipient of your gifts to others; then you won't give selfishly, with a hope to receive in return.

Mix the ingredients well with cheery words and smiles and acts of simple charity, and when Christmas comes we guarantee what we wish you — A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

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The Liguorian

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One Dollar per Year

(Canada and Foreign, \$1.25)

Entered as second-class matter August 29th, 1913, at the Post Office at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Acceptance for mailing at special rates of postage provided for in section 1103, act of October 3, 1917. Authorized July 17, 1918.

Published with ecclesiastical approval.

THE LIGUORIAN



A Popular Monthly Magazine According to the Spirit of St.
Alphonsus Devoted to the Growth of Catholic Belief and Practice

Vol. XXVII.

DECEMBER, 1939

No. 12

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"SHINING THINGS"

We are the babies of Bethlehem
Dimpled and soft as down.
We gurgled and cooed in our own mothers' arms
When the Kings rode into town.

Bells and bridles and braided reins,
Camels sneering and sly,
Curious cinnamon-tinted slaves,
And velvet of purple dye. . . .

Babies we bawled for their shining things:
Vases of twisted brass,
Shawls, small ivory apes and pearls,
And attar of rose in glass. . . .

Herod had sent them to Bethlehem
In quest of a "new-born king";
Perchance they were looking for one of us
Said our mothers wheedling!

But slowly the caravans lumbered by
Blurring dreamily dim
. . . Then Herod came with a shining blade
For us all . . . except for *Him*.

—J. J. Galvin.

FATHER TIM CASEY

MARY'S STORY OF CHRISTMAS

C. D. McENNERY

THERE is no denying it: they formed a cosy group. After responding with the appropriate "Amen" and "Holy Mary's" to Father Casey's prayer, they settled down in the most comfortable chairs and waited expectantly for the inception of the Great Experiment. Waiting however was not their strong suit. Delizia Hogan had to break out rapturously:

"At last St. Mary's young people are to have a study club all their own! I am thrilled to death!"

"A study club," the priest corrected, "is a group who *study*. I have no such optimistic illusions regarding this crowd of loafers. We shall nevertheless pretend it is a study club — and let it go at that. The subject we have chosen is the Life of Christ."

"But, really, Father, we did study," she protested. "We followed your instructions, reading the first two chapters of each of the four gospels and the beginning of one of the books you loaned us."

"I can vouch for Delizia at any rate," said Richard Ranaghan, while Miss Hogan smiled her thanks, "because," he added, "she borrowed my New Testament a little while ago (saying she had lost hers) and raced through the assigned reading, while keeping one ear open so as not to miss any of our gossip."

"So that is *study*! Very well, my lady, you may begin."

"Oh, Father! Please!" she begged in panic. "Let Dick show us how. He is a lawyer — and so brilliant," she added, to make retreat impossible.

Ranaghan was proof against even such flattery. "Father Casey knows too well that everybody in this club will be tongue-tied until he himself gives us a good start," he declared.

"Very well then. Where shall we begin with our Life of Christ? St. Mark begins when Christ is already a grown man; St. John begins back in the infinite ages of eternity —"

"Let us follow St. Luke — begin with the birth of St. John the Baptist. He was the forerunner of Christ. Hence his miraculous birth

and all that accompanied it presents an ideal introduction for the Life of Christ."

"And he learned all he wrote from the lips of Our Blessed Mother herself, didn't he, Father?" said Gaby Flanders. "Whenever I read those first chapters of the gospel of St. Luke, I see herself and her cousin Elizabeth sitting out in the vine-covered porch of that little house in 'the hill country,' and I can almost hear them talking."

"SO BE it, then. Let that same vine-covered porch be our starting point. Elizabeth and Zachary are there making fast the door before setting out for Jerusalem; for the lonely old couple have no sons or daughters to mind the house in their absence. With just a little sigh of regret they turn their backs on this restful spot. They are growing slow and stiff, and the long, hot journey has lost its appeal. But his week of temple service has come round again, and go' they must — just as their fathers before them. For both Zachary and Elizabeth are children of a long line of Jewish priests.

"Some days later," the priest continued, "a nervous multitude, waiting in the vast marble court surrounding the temple, wonder why Priest Zachary tarries so long within the Holy, where he had entered alone, according to the prescribed rite, to incense the altar. Impending calamities, so they believe, are often revealed by Jehovah to their representative while he is there within the Holy. Their nervousness gives way to terror when at long last Zachary staggers out, apparently under the strain of some intense emotion and bereft of speech and hearing.

"What had happened? There appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense, saying: Fear not, Zachary. Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear a son and thou shalt call his name John. He shall be the Precursor, the Forerunner, to prepare the way for the promised Messiah. Zachary doubted whether such a thing were possible, since both he and his wife were so old. I am Gabriel, said the angel, and I am sent to bring these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be dumb until the day wherein these things shall come to pass because thou hast not believed my words.

"Six months later the same Angel Gabriel was sent again. This time to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel, being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. And Mary said: How can this be done? For she and Joseph had agreed to live together like brother and sister in perfect continence. And the angel answering said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall over-shadow thee. Therefore the the Holy One born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Then Mary said: I am God's handmaid ready to do His will. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

"And that moment occurred the greatest event this world has ever witnessed: by the divine power of the Holy Ghost, God the Son, the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, who is called 'the Word,' took a human body and soul in the most chaste womb of Mary. And the Word was made flesh. God became man.

"Before leaving, the angel had given a sign in proof of his announcement. And behold, he had said, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son, even in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because nothing is impossible with God. What more natural than that Mary should set out with all haste to visit that little house in the hill country, that these two women, the bearers of such sublime secrets, might commune together, in awe and wonder, on what the power of the Most High God had wrought within them!

"No sooner had Elizabeth caught sight of Mary coming in under the vine-covered porch than she exclaimed: Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

"**T**HAT is the origin of the Hail Mary, isn't it, Father? The angel had said: Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women. And now Elizabeth says: Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Is it not remarkable that they should both have used exactly the same words — blessed art thou amongst women?"

"Not surprising," returned the priest, "when we remember both were inspired what to say by the same Most High God."

"Now I understand," said Gaby Flanders, "why the Blessed Virgin is so well pleased with that prayer. What sweet and sacred memories are awakened every time she hears it! The first part recalls the time when the sublime privilege of Mother of God was revealed to her alone;

the second part, when it was revealed to one of her fellow creatures."

"Since we know," said Father Casey, "that she listens with such pleasure every time we say 'Hail Mary,' we take advantage of the occasion and follow it up immediately with 'Holy Mary, pray for us.' We know she cannot refuse our petition."

"What a pity, Father, we do not recall these bible scenes while we rattle off 'Hail Mary's' so thoughtlessly. — Well, anyhow, she knows we mean well. And she has always been an indulgent mother."

"We can judge," the priest explained; "how deeply these words please her by the effect they had upon her the first time she heard them from the lips of St. Elizabeth."

"What effect was that, Father?"

"She was immediately rapt into, what we might call, prophetic ecstasy and pronounced the *Magnificat* — 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' Daily throughout the ages, every monastery of monks, every convent of nuns, every cathedral or collegiate choir, that chants the divine office, every lonely priest, that recites his breviary, concludes Vespers, the evening song of the Church, by repeating: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.* Thus verifying her own words: 'For behold, from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed.'"

"**F**ATHER, the gospel says Mary remained with her cousin about three months."

"Yes. Then she returned to Joseph in Nazareth. He could not fail to notice that she was with child. Convinced, at the same time, of her spotless purity, the poor man was confused and mystified. But an angel appeared to him: Fear not, Joseph, that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus (which means Saviour), for He shall save His people from their sins.

"And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. And Joseph went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife.

"And it came to pass that while they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a

manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"And there were in the same country shepherds keeping the night watches over their flocks. And behold the angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear.

"And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be for all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

"After the angels had departed from them, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that has come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.

"And they came with haste. And they found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in the manger.

"And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard wondered at the tidings that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.

"That is," the priest concluded, "pondering them in her heart until the day should come on which she was to relate the story to St. Luke for his inspired gospel."

"None but a mother could relate a story so sublime in such sweet and simple words," said Gabriella Flanders.

Children

* God sends children for another purpose than merely to keep up the race—to enlarge our hearts; and to make us unselfish and full of kindly sympathies and affections; to give our souls higher aims; to call out all our faculties to extended enterprise and exertion; and to bring round our firesides bright faces, happy smiles, and loving, tender hearts. My soul blesses the great Father, every day, that He has gladdened the earth with little children. — *Mary Howitt*. *

ON BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO

F. A. Ryan

His favorite saying was: "No priest is going to tell me what to do." He flung it angrily at his wife, when she reminded him of how long it had been since he had gone to confession. He said it sarcastically among his pagan companions, as one proving his right to be their friend by a public disavowal of all faith. He said it bitterly to himself, whenever his conscience rose up to smite him, or to whisper vaguely that he was being a fool.

Yet every day he went to work, and a boss who had got his job by being a relative of the firm's president, who did not know one-tenth of what he knew about the business, told him what to do—and he did it, meek as a lamb.

Every day he went into a cigar store where gambling bets were taken, listened to a good-for-nothing race-track tout, and in the end did what he was told, i.e., bet on the wrong horse and lost his hard-earned money.

Every day he went into a food shop and asked about the bargains of the day; and when the store-keeper recommended a special value, he bought it, while the man laughed behind his back at how easy it was to get rid of shopworn goods.

Every time he got a hair cut, the barber told him about some new symptom of hair decay that had become evident, and when the barber recommended a remedy, he bought it as any one of a hundred others would do.

Every time he needed clothes, the tailor let him see only the latest styles, and by deft salesmanship made him buy what he wanted to sell. He bought it and wore what a million other men are wearing because someone told them it was the style.

But "no priest is going to tell me what to do" he always said. The boss at the shop, the racing tout, the grocer, the baker, the barber, the clothier,—all these tell him daily what to do, and each one gains from the man's subservient obedience. But the priest, who has nothing to gain, who only repeats what God has said for the happiness of man, who appeals to the reason and common sense and everlasting instincts of man—the priest must never, never whisper a word of advice or direction to this man.

It is not so hard to be a fool!

CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

Nothing can add so much to the joy of a modern Christmas as a glimpse into the jollity it brought forth in the past. These carols make that jollity live through the centuries.

F. A. BRUNNER

THE man of the Middle Ages, long pitied or laughed at, is now held in reverence. His philosophy, his art, even his religion are subjects of wonder. Thinkers are lauding and quoting St. Thomas and the subtle scholastics. Sociologists are praising the guild system and adapting it to today's situation. In every city of the land Gothic cathedrals are more or less successfully copied. And the songs of the Middle Ages are on our lips — the old plain chant melodies, the simple hymn tunes.

Particularly is this true at Christmastide when once more are sung the medieval carols that have weathered the battering of the years and show no signs of foundering. Indeed, no body of poetry is more immortally beautiful than the carols, artless though they be. Theirs is a loveliness created out of the wretchedest materials — a church tune, perhaps, or a folk-song melody, some doggerel verse, and a scrap or two of poor Latin. But infuse them with mystic ecstasies, in faith and devotion make them relevant to the heavenly birth at Bethlehem — how radiant they become!

In no other literature are there found such songs of pure inspiration. What matchless grace, for instance, in the simple lines:

He came all so still
To where His Mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on grass.

He came all so still
To His Mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on flower.

He came all so still
To where His Mother lay,
As dew in April
That maketh no spray.

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The carols are essentially popular poems, perhaps in their origin more profane than pious. Yet the devotional heart of the people seized on them as an expression of simple faith and joy. They were not the voice of the cultured few nor even of the educated many, but of the great mass of hard-working, godly, jovial, unlettered people, glad to have a holiday. They were the spontaneous outbursts of the ordinary man and woman, translating into language their own thoughts and emotions.

Adam lay i-bounden
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long;
And all was for an apple,
An apple that he took,
As clerks finden
Written in their book.

If the apple hadn't taken been,
The apple taken been,
Then had never our Lady
A-been heaven's Queen.
Blessed be the time
The apple taken was.
Therefrom we may well sing,
Deo gratias!

Surely a song of the common people, bald, bold, and vigorous. And only a broad-backed peasant, who found simple pleasure in simple comfort, could sing with a will:

Jesu sweet, be not wroth
Tho I have neither clout nor cloth
Thee in for to fold,
Thee in for to fold or wrap,
For I have neither clout nor lap,
But lay thou thy feet to my pap
And guard thee from the cold.

Only a man with a keen realization of Christ's humanity — lowly enough to know full well what Christ's life was like, and human enough to express it — could put to Jesus' lips:

Mother, I pray thee
Take me up aloft,
And in thine arm
Keep thou me warm
And dance me now full oft,
And if I weep

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And will not sleep
Then sing: Byebye, lully, lulley!

Only a man of the soil could sing the shepherd-pipe refrain and not think it affected:

Tirly tirlow, tirly tirlow!
So merrily the shepherds began to blow.

All these folk-songs, jingled out of an evening by the fire-side, told of the common man's joyful belief in Christ, a simple unquestioning faith in the only real meaning of Christmas:

This king is come to save mankind,
As in the Scripture truths we find;
Therefore this song have we in mind:
In excelsis gloria!

Some of these tender carols are more familiar to us than others. Most of us have heard one version or other of the so-called *Ballad of the Three Ships*.

I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas day in the morning.

And who was in those ships all three
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And who was in those ships all three
On Christmas day in the morning?

Our Saviour Christ and His Lady
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
Our Savior Christ and His Lady
On Christmas day in the morning.

Another version, more lively than this, adds a few pleasant details.

As I sat under a sycamore tree,
A sycamore tree, a sycamore tree,
I looked me out upon the sea
On Christmas day in the morning.

I saw three ships a-sailing there,
A-sailing there, a-sailing there;
Jesus, Mary and Joseph they bare
On Christmas day in the morning.

Joseph did whistle and Mary did sing,
And Mary did sing, and Mary did sing,

THE LIGUORIAN

And all the bells on earth did ring
On Christmas day in the morning.

Oh, they sailed in to Bethlehem,
To Bethlehem, to Bethlehem,
Saint Michael was the steersman
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the men on earth did sing,
On earth did sing, on earth did sing:
Welcome be Thou, heaven's King,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Most of us, too, are familiar at least with the story of the famous *Cherry-Tree Carol*. Mary and Joseph are on their way to Bethlehem before the birth of the Savior. As they pass a cherry tree, Mary desires some of the fruit and asks Joseph to fetch it. He brusquely refuses, whereupon the tree bends down its branches and offers the fruit to her.

Often in the olden carols is found a note of melancholy—a mingling of the sorrows and tears of mankind with the rapture of heavenly music. Faith looked out beyond the years, in dread foreboding of Christ's lot on earth:

All of a clean maiden our Lord was i-born,
Us for to save that all were forlorn—
So blessed be the time!
Lullay! lullay! little child, my own dear food,
How shalt thou suffering be nailed on the rood?—
So blessed be the time!

But the dominant note of the carols is one of merriment and good cheer—

"Lift up your hearts, ye, and be glad
In Christ's birth," the angel bade. . . .

Carols, in fact, were the commonest expression of jollity and were quite usually sung in the dining hall as frequently as in the churchyard. Religion was, after all, an essential of daily life, and when at Christmas time princes and peasants gathered about the wassail-bowl and feasted on the traditional boar's head, carol singing was the order of the day. They probably shouted their song out loud and long, they pounded out the rhythms with clap of hand and stamp of foot. But all their boisterous revel, they were not ashamed to confess, was in honor of the birth of the King of kings.

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This boar's head we bring with song
In worship, of Him that thus Sprong
From a Virgin to redress all wrong,
Noel!

Those who study such things tell us that the carol was originally a dance melody — a dance in the churchyard, perhaps, or in the square before the church, or more likely, a dance at home in the hall or barn. Such dance songs are many of them extant, a particularly fine example being found in this tuneful jingle:

In an ox-stall this night we saw
(The snow in the street, the wind on the door)
A Babe and a Maid without a flaw
(Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor!)

There was an old man there beside
(The snow in the street, the wind on the door)
His hair was white and his hood was wide
(Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor!)

But whether chansons of jolly feasting and gay dancing or solemn churchly melodies, the same spirit of worship was always there:

Make we merry in hall and bower —
This time is born our Savior!

It is a spirit we find hard to recapture, we who create the artificial divide between things secular and things religious, we who have lost the sense of the nearness of the spiritual to our workaday world. Perhaps this Christmastide the simplicity of these lyrics, so soothing, so tender, will penetrate our modern hearts to fill them with the lowliness and faith of a bygone age.

Now chant we merrily *io*
With such as play in *organo*
And with the singers in *choro*,
Benedicamus Domino!

None has more frequent conversations with disagreeable self than the man of pleasure; his enthusiasms are but few and transient: his appetites, like angry creditors, are continually making fruitless demands for what he is unable to pay; and the greater his former pleasures, the more strong his regret, the more impatient his expectations. — *Goldsmith.*



THOUGHT FOR THE SHUT-IN

L. F. Hyland

My Dear Friend:

Of all times of the year, I find it easiest to write to you, one who has been granted the lot of suffering and helplessness, at Christmas, when the thought of the world's first and greatest Shut-in is before us all. Never could the heart of man be more beautifully taught the glory and grandeur of helplessness than when the Son of God became the Shut-in of the stable.

Measure the contrast between your lot and His. You came out of nothing at the word of God, with no rights (for nothing can transmit no rights), no claims, no authority to demand this or that from God. Yet you were given infinite things by Him who made you. A soul, indestructible and immortal. A mind and will—even like God's. A glorious destiny of which no one can deprive you. You were shut-in from the first on earth, which at best is like a prison, because, roam where it will, the spirit of man seeks release to be admitted into the infinite and everlasting domains of God. You have been confined a bit more than ordinary mortals—but this confinement is the veriest accident of circumstance in relation to the great things God has in store for you.

And the lot of your Saviour? He was the uncreated God—the everlasting one, the Infinite One, unconfined and uncaused. He came down on Christmas and allowed Himself to be confined. Not on the whole earth as in a prison; not in a king's palace, or a lord's estate; not in an inn nor in a house—but in a stable. Sick persons look from the window of a hospital or of a comfortable dwelling, and long for the freedom of those whom they see passing by; but the King of Kings looked through the doorway of a stable and used none of His infinite power to leave its sorry shelter and roam at will.

There must be a good reason then for being a shut-in. God does nothing unreasonably; rather, put it this way: He does everything with the sublimest of reasons because He is God. And to be the nearest like Him of all the creatures He gave the nature which He adopted, to be confined just a little as He confined Himself in a stable, is being Godlike in a very special way. May I congratulate you and beg for your prayers?

VERSIONS OF CHRISTMAS

When traveling men get into an argument, they can easily come to blows. This is an argument won without blows, when a boy came in and took all the stakes.

D. F. MILLER

CHARACTERS

Railroad Station Agent — *very anonymous*

H. B. Freethinker — *a bit on the dissipated side*

L. N. Modernist — *a bridger of gaps*

R. C. Christian — *takes the outer shell off things*

A boy — *one of a million*

THE SCENE: *A railroad station in a small town. A dim light hangs from ceiling, revealing a shabby, much scarred interior. An old fashioned stove stands in the center of the room. A long bench typical of all old railroad stations, lines the wall. H. B. Freethinker, L. N. Modernist, and R. C. Christian are sprawled variously on the bench, with their grips piled at their feet. As curtain goes up, the station agent, an old man with a limp, his cheek bulging with a large chew of tobacco, enters and with a piece of chalk writes on the blackboard hanging on the wall: "East bound train for Chicago, due 8:05, one hour late." He limps out and the three men turn and look at the sign with varying expressions of disgust.*

H. B. F. Ye gods! Ye gods! Do we have to wait another hour in this hole! Can't these trains ever run on time! No wonder they're losing all their business. I wish I had come in my car now, despite the icy roads and snowy weather.

L. N. M. (*Resignedly*) I suppose it's the Christmas rush that causes the delay. But why it has to be my luck to hit these late trains every time I buy a ticket is beyond me.

R. C. C. I don't mind the wait, but I hope I won't get home too late to help my wife put up the Christmas tree for the kids. That's more fun than I have all the rest of the year.

H. B. F. (*With poorly concealed scorn*) Do you still go in for that sort of foolishness? I thought that went out with the dark ages.

R. C. C. (*Quietly*) What do you mean, dark ages?

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H. B. F. Oh, when people believed in Santa Claus and Christmas presents and all that sort of thing.

R. C. C. I don't make my children believe in Santa Claus, although I don't see that I have to deny them that joy if it appeals to their childish minds. But I do make them believe in Christ — and that's Christmas and everything that belongs to it.

H. B. F. You can have it. As for me, I believe in nothing.

R. C. C. Then I pity you. You are a man without hope. (*Looks him straight in the eye*) More than that, you are a man who has no right to exist.

H. B. F. (*At first withering a bit under the straightforward gaze of R. C. C., then straightening up and returning the gaze angrily*) I resent that. I have as much right to live as you or anybody else, and I don't need any Christian hokum or Christmas buncombe to get what I want out of life.

R. C. C. No need to get angry. I'll wager I can prove what I've said. Are you willing to let me try?

H. B. F. (*Sullenly, but with a half-hearted interest*) You can't do it.

R. C. C. (*Briskly*) Are you married?

H. B. F. Yes.

R. C. C. How many times?

H. B. F. What's that go to do —

R. C. C. How many times?

H. B. F. Well, three times.

R. C. C. Divorced wives living?

H. B. F. Yes.

R. C. C. Had any children?

H. B. F. None of your d——

R. C. C. All right. All right. No children. Don't believe in 'em, eh?

H. B. F. (*Stands up and turns facing R. C. C. with an affected bravado*) I suppose you're one of those guys who go around telling people how to run their family affairs. I suppose you think you can come in my home and tell me what I have to do. Well, I'll tell you a thing or two. I don't believe in cluttering up my home with a lot of brats. I live my own life, see. I go where I want and do what I please, see. It's my business —

R. C. C. Take it easy, take it easy. I'm not telling you to do any-

thing. But you're telling the world that you have no right to exist. If there hadn't been a little Christianity in your ancestors, and a little of genuine Christian spirit in their hearts, you wouldn't be here. None of us would be here. The world would be a desert. All our would-be fathers and mothers would have got divorced before they could have had any children. Or they would have been so busy flying around looking for the kind of pleasure that cuts deep lines into people's faces like yours that they would never have had any children. If it weren't for Christ and the 300,000,000 people who believe in Him and a billion or so more who accept His principles even though they hardly know Him, you wouldn't be sitting there now. You would never have been born.

H. B. F. You've got a lot of crust for a stranger. You're itching for a paste in the nose, you priest-ridden preacher.

R. C. C. (*Relaxes in his seat, laughs gaily, thrusts his hands in his pockets.*) I'm not worried. But you ought to be.

L. N. M. (*Who has been watching the other two up to now, and feels that it is about time to prevent a fist fight.*) I think that both of you are wrong. One says that there's nothing to Christmas, the other says that Christmas is everything. Now, for my part, I think the Christmas spirit is a grand thing. You give and you receive. You sing and you dance. You meet your friends and everybody's happy. It is the expression of the universal humanitarian spirit, and should be preserved.

R. C. C. (*Still lolling in his seat. Breaks into a tune.*) "Hail, Hail, the gang's all here" — that sort of thing, eh? Is that what you mean by Christmas?

L. N. M. Well, yes, something like that.

R. C. C. But there's nothing to it, really? There's no real Christ — is that what you mean?

L. N. M. Well, Christ is the universal embodiment of the spirit of giving. It is reborn in every age. Men have created Christ, in order to have something around which to center their spirit of giving.

R. C. C. (*Gets up from his seat, and goes over to where H. B. F. is standing, still rather sullen. Puts out his hand.*) Shake hands, pal. Did you hear what our friend over here just said?

H. B. F. Yes.

R. C. C. Did you make any sense out of it?

H. B. F. (*Puzzled*) No.

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R. C. C. Neither did I. Do you think his mind is all right? Do you think that possibly something may have happened to him — perhaps when he was a baby? (*Turns to L. N. M., who by now is sputtering with wrath worse than that shown by H. B. F. before.*) Let me get this straight now. You say that Christmas is the embodiment of the spirit of giving. That people create Christ just to have a reason for giving?

L. N. M. (*Haughtily*) I won't argue with you. It is evident that you have not read any of the latest and best books on the meaning of Christmas. There's no use arguing with an ignoramus.

R. C. C. Oh, please argue with me. Please let me be enlightened. What's the good of all these books you read, if you can't help out a poor ignoramus like me? I'm just looking for information, that's all. Do you have time to read the newspapers?

(*L. N. M. turns and stares moodily out of the window.*)

R. C. C. I see that you do. Then you know that there is a war going on in Europe, another in the Orient, and a few assorted revolutions in other countries. Now what I want to know is this: if men just have to create a Christ, if they must have an embodiment of the spirit of giving in order to give, why don't they do something right now and start giving peace and life to one another instead of death and war? What's the matter with your fictitious Christ?

(*L. N. M. begins tapping vexatiously on the window sill.*)

R. C. C. I'll tell you what's wrong with him. Your Christ is all right for the other fellow. Let the other fellow create a Christ every year and then give in his name; let the other fellow be just and kind and pure and merciful in the name of this fictitious Christ. But when you and the war lords and the dictators want something you have no right to, then he is only a fiction — only a name. That's why you don't talk sense when you speak, like those empty-headed authors you read, about the incarnate spirit of Christmas being recreated every year, which is all so much blah-blah-blah.

(*L. N. M., who started out being a peacemaker, is now ready for war himself. He half turns from the window at the insulting words, then thinks better of it and turns back.*)

R. C. C. The only Christ who could make Christmas, is the real Christ, the one who was born in a stable, who raised the dead, who died on a cross, who rose from the dead himself, who is still loved as a living, life-giving person even though He is God. If there is no such Christ,

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then I'll take my stand with our friend over here, and believe in nothing. But thank God I don't have to, and my children don't have to, because He's real — because He is Christmas. . . . Listen, both of you.

(Outside the station a boy is heard singing. The words creep into the old station and all three, standing now, are silent.)

Boy: Silent night, holy night. . . .

Christ the Saviour is born

Christ the Saviour is born.

(The door opens, and a lad, muffled up in an old ragged coat and with a dirty stocking cap on his head, looks in.)

Boy: Merry Christmas, everybody. Can you give a dime or a nickel for the poor?

R. C. C. Give? Why should we give?

Boy: *(Amazed and a little flustered)* Well, it's Christmas eve, ain't it? When Christ was born, you know.

R. C. C. What is the money for?

Boy: Oh, it ain't for me, mister. It's for the kids that's worse off than me. Every Christmas we other kids go around and sing so's we can help them.

R. C. C. I see. Well, here. *(The Boy approaches R. C. C. takes a dollar out of his pocket and gives it to him.)*

Boy: Gee, mister, a buck! That'll buy out the toy shop. And will the kids be happy!

(R. C. C. picks up his bags and walks out of the station. The other two men are left, standing apart.)

Boy: *(To H. B. F.)* How about you, mister?

H. B. F. *(Looks furtively at L. N. M., then reaches into his pocket and takes out a dollar bill.)* Here. *(He picks up his bags and hurriedly walks out.)*

Boy: *(after whistling with surprise.)* Thanks, mister, thanks.

(The boy, overcome with the generosity he has already met, starts for the door. He has his hand on the knob, when L. N. M. turns around and yells.)

L. N. M. Hey! Come here, you. *(Takes out a five dollar bill.)* Take this, boy, and buy all the candy and toys in the town. Take it, and go on with you, do you hear? Take it, and get out.

Boy: *(Almost afraid to touch the five dollar bill)* Do you mean it, mister? Can you afford it? I can get an awful lot with the two bucks these other gents gave me. Honest, I can.

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L. N. M. (Thrusting the bill into his hand) For the love of —, for the love of —, (his voice drops almost to a whisper) for the love of Christ, take it, and get out.

Boy: Gee, mister, I'll get all the poor kids to pray for you. A merry, merry Christmas, mister.

(A train whistle is heard.)

Station Agent: (Sticking his head out of his office) Train for Chicago-a-a-ago, all aboard.

(L. N. M. hurries out. The boy lingers and then turns to the agent.)

Boy: Gee, but they're swell guys.

Station Agent: Oh, yeah? You should've heard 'em ten minutes ago. Merry Christmas, kid. Here's a nickel for the poor.

Stadium Contrasts

Is the civilization of the 20th century A.D. more advanced than the civilization of the 4th century B.C.? In some things, undoubtedly. In other things, quite certainly not. An appreciation of the evils of intemperance is of the nature of civilization. Or to put it more clearly, an appreciation of the times and places when indulgence in stimulants is dangerous is of the warp and woof of civilization. All, Christian and pagan, will admit this. Compare then the custom of the Greeks at their athletic contests as that custom is told us in an inscription dated 400 B.C., with the custom of Americans at their football games. The Greek inscription reads thus:

"Wine must not be taken into the precinct of Endromos (the stadium)."

Certain penalties in the way of making sacrifices were specified and a fine of five drachmas was to be imposed on all offenders, one-half of which was to go to the informer.

Imagine, if you can, a sign hanging above each gate of America's various stadia:

"Whiskey must not be taken into the precinct of University Bowl. Anyone found having on his person a hip-flask will be liable to a fine—such as to go to church on three consecutive Sundays and worship God."

Such a sign would be interpreted as a direct attack on liberty, and as an insidious effort to undermine the constitution. An investigation might be begun immediately in Washington on un-American activities. The attitude would be that if a man wants to get drunk, or if a thousand men want to get drunk, that's their affair, even though dire consequences result.

Nothing would be said about civilization.

IN CASE YOU'RE MARTYRED

They say we should learn by experience. Here is a first hand view of how things will happen if and when your day of martyrdom comes. The gay tone of the article means that you should think of it gaily, even though it would not be so easy to take.

B. McWILLIAMS

NOW that the Communists are becoming such a threat in this country, it looks as though American Catholics might be scheduled for a spell of good old-fashioned persecution. Everybody is agreed that at least it can happen here. That it might is not too fantastic a supposition. But for some sake or other, we'll presume that we actually will have a persecution, say, late in 1945; we'll presume that hundreds of thousands are going to be martyred and we'll dare to presume also that you, dear reader, will be among those thousands. And since you are to be martyred (we no longer presume, you notice) you might want to know what every well-instructed martyr should know. It would never do for you gallantly to lay down your life and then find that you hadn't fulfilled some one or other of four necessary conditions for martyrdom. So listen closely, you who are about to be shot.

The Communist head-hunters are already scouring the streets, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Up to the present, they have concentrated their efforts on the clergy and on the harmless, hard-working nuns. But right now they are after you, — you who have worked in an office and pattered around your garden and are wondering what in the deuce you have done to become an enemy of the proletariat. But never mind. It's even harder to imagine how the nuns are "enemies of the proletariat." Maybe that "enemy" stuff is just a catch slogan. Perhaps this persecution is all because Communists bitterly hate Christ and His Church. Maybe — and perhaps.

But on with the chase. Word has been passed around that the Communists are now out after the laity. In fact, as you peep through your window-curtains, you see a couple coming up the porch steps right this minute. The question is, what will you do now? And here we come to an issue that has been volleyed back and forth for twenty centuries.

One answer is to calmly wait for the goons (la, Mr. Mencken) and take whatever may come, just as Christ stood quietly in the garden and said "Whom seek you?" The other answer is to run, hide, get away just as Christ did when the rabble of Nazareth wanted to throw Him off their highest cliff. It would seem from the fact that Christ both did and did not run away, that you would be free to do either, too. However, if you have a family or some such thing depending on you, the better part of valour would be to get away. Saint Thomas a Becket, though later he refused to leave England, at first got out of the country as fast as he could when he knew that the king wanted to kill him. And because St. Athanasius felt he could do more for his flock alive than dead, he dodged martyrdom all his life, thereby executing some very clever escapes.

But not all the saints ran away from martyrdom. To cite but one example, St. Thomas a Becket again. When he did finally deem it best not to escape martyrdom any longer, he faced with calmness and dignity the drunken soldiers of the king. So if you feel strong enough, you may refuse to run away likewise. And, if you can do that sort of thing in the grand manner without the bat of an eyelash or a quaver in your voice, invite your murderers in for a mint-julep first. But if you don't feel strong enough, run for all you're worth.

ALL RIGHT, then, we'll say you ran for all you were worth. Out the side door you go: but two sinister figures loom out of the darkness. You retreat hastily and head for the back door. You're safely out and making your way to the fence when (let's get this thing over with) you're suddenly tackled from behind by two huskies who majored in football and Communism at a tax-supported university. And so, on to the firing squad. At least, that's what you think is in store for you. You are thrilled. The firing squad sounds easy—it means a swift, exhilarating trip to the end of glory-road. But as these Communists drive you through the streets of Barcelo—of New York in a State Trooper's car—indeed they are wearing State Troopers' uniforms—you suddenly see a crowd out on Union Square being sprayed with gasoline. You are wondering what the idea is when, without warning, the gasoline is ignited from somewhere and there follows a scene which gives you something a whole lot worse than the jitters. Your captors express very evident approval of this lovely little holocaust

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since otherwise they would be reported for lack of sympathy with the Revolution — reported either by spies or, if they themselves are spies, by counter-spies, or if they themselves are counter-spies, by counter-counter-spies, etc., etc.

But now that the worst of the scene before you is over, your car moves ahead. You are glad. You have seen enough. Anything else like that might weaken you. But apparently your captors aren't worried about weakening you. You are given a splendid opportunity to see dead priests hanging up beside dead pigs in a meat-shop window. You see more priests and plenty of laymen dangling from lamp-posts. You are shown people stark with fright being shoved one by one into a blast furnace. (And if what you have seen so far reminds you of the Spanish war, two years ago, you must remember that the "Loyalists" fled from Spain to Mexico and then quietly and slowly and in small groups alighted in New York to become the guiding genuises of this Revolution.)

AND so by this time, martyrdom has completely lost its glamor. You are getting very weak. Right now, believe it or not, you'd better start to pray. It's going to take a lot of courage to see this thing through — the supernatural courage that comes from grace. It's hard enough to lay down your life in defence of your country when you have a gun in your own hands. But it is a thousand times harder to die for your Faith especially in the frightful ways you have just seen people die for their Faith, and without so much as a word to say. Moreover, to anybody but a saint, Faith often seems a terribly inconsequential thing at this moment, something far less precious than one's life. I say, it only seems that way. You know deep down that it would be rotten and wrong to bog down now. As a consequence, you'd better spend the rest of your journey in fervent prayer.

But now we've come to a police-station. In a moment you are standing before a judge, a nice, smooth, well-bred judge who gives you the impression that you're just being bull-headed about this business of Faith. "Come, come," his first glance tells you "let's be sensible about this thing." And for a moment you contemplate throwing away everything and agreeing with him: but somebody gives you a kick (probably your guardian angel) and you become more determined than ever. At this point you remember vaguely stories that you vaguely heard in one

or the other sermon about martyrs who stood before their judges, tossing off light, airy jests and snapping their fingers contemptuously at the threat of torture and death. Your breast swells; you're going to go down in history.

But all of a sudden you learn that you've been brought here on a charge not of Catholicism but of Fascism. Documented proof is brought forth that you earn \$60 a week (tsk, tsk, you old capitalist, you) and that you gave some money for the rehabilitation of Nationalist Spain. Right now, you're in a spot that you had better get out of. If you are shot simply for being a Fascist, you won't really be a martyr, since according to condition number one for martyrdom (at last, these conditions!) you have to die for the Faith or some other Christian virtue. Perhaps you had better indignantly deny that you are a Fascist. Shout out "Down with Chamberlain and the British Empire and hurrah for — well, whatever country Stalin will be wooing by 1945." More than likely the court will still hold that you are a Fascist but we'll say the judge looks around for another pretext. Before much questioning, you are found out to be a Catholic (you were asked to make the sign of the cross and you unfortunately made one of those funny little finger-wiggles peculiar to contemporary Catholics instead of the nice solemn ones non-Catholics make, say, at public beaches before a high-dive); and so, being a Catholic, you naturally endanger the well being of the proletariat. Wherefore the judge, shrugging his shoulders regretfully, sentences you to die. The charge: treason to the proletariat by reason of your being a Catholic. You breathe a sigh of relief. At last you are to be a martyr instead of a headless Fascist. Still, even the charge of Fascism might merit martyrdom for you. Communists might cry "Fascism" and mean the same thing that Elizabethan England meant when it cried "treason."

BUT according to condition No. 2, you have still to die, and as Hamlet said (Act III, Scene 1, line 66, W. J. Rolfe edition), "There's the rub!" You begin to shake all over: a great terror has gripped you. The terror of death. You don't want to die: you want to live. You thought you could be another of those thousands of martyrs who went gaily and gallantly to death. You feel neither gay nor gallant. Instead there is a fierce repugnance within you. But don't worry: this repugnance and very unheroic way of acting will not take away the

merit of your martyrdom. Of course if you had been sensible enough to live like a saint, you could now face death with a saint's careless abandon, and perhaps, by a show of heroism, make a convert or two from among your murderers, as saints in the past have done. But repugnance or no repugnance, all that is necessary (cond. No. 3) is to submit to God's will in this affair. God is the master of life and death, and consequently you must acknowledge His right to take your life away when and how He chooses. Herein will lie the chief merit of your martyrdom, because to resign yourself to a violent death while still in the prime of life will be a very difficult thing to do. Death will be yours whether you will it or not, but you are free to will or not will the acceptance of your death; and since merit is given only for something you do of your own free will, acceptance is the necessary but also the sensible, the valiant and the richest part of your martyrdom.

There remains but one more condition. If one is in mortal sin, i.e. a mortal sin for which one is not sorry even with attrition, martyrdom will not help him get to heaven. He will go as quickly to hell as if he had committed suicide. If it is your misfortune to be in mortal sin, be sure to make an act of contrition and if possible make a good confession. However, it is hardly necessary to worry about making an act of contrition, since Catholics, as a rule, instinctively do this whenever there is danger of death. And anyway the will to be a martyr almost always contains, at least implicitly, sorrow for sin.

AND so as you're being taken out of the police station, you make an act of resignation and an act of contrition. That is all you have to do. You don't have to have a smile on your face. You don't have to be imbued with the conviction that this is the happiest day of your life. You don't have to be all courtesy and kindness to the boys who have been detailed to give you your ride. In fact, as long as you don't descend to downright resistance, no great harm would be done if you kicked one of the boys in the shins. Well, at last the end comes. You are taken somewhere and blown to bits. Gasoline was forced down your throat and then ignited. As you went to atoms, the Communists howled with glee. But before the smoke has cleared away, you are enjoying a glory and honor that nothing can surpass. And on the last day, the bits of your body will come together again and it will be given back to you as bright and brilliant almost as the glorified body of Christ — because you suffered what Christ suffered — martyrdom.

Three Minute Instruction

ADVENT THEME

The real way to appreciate Advent is to try to project oneself into the spirit and feeling of the times preceding the actual birth of Christ some 1900 years ago. It is to look at life suddenly and briefly as though Christ had not yet been born; as though there were no crib nor cross nor Blessed Sacrament nor Church around which all life's interests might turn.

1. This would be to feel something of the poignant uncertainty of the pagan philosopher Socrates, who, without benefit of any revealed religion, yet prophesied that God must become man. He was one of the greatest thinkers of ancient times; he probed nearer to the heart of universal truth than any of his predecessors and most of his followers, and that with his unaided reason. Yet when he had exercised his brilliant mind to learn as much about man's being and purpose as possible, he cried out in the end: If we are to know all the truth necessary for our happiness, God who made us must come down and teach us in His own words.

2. The real spirit of Advent is to be found in the pleadings of the Psalmist David for a glimpse of the face of God: "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts; my soul longeth and panteth for Thee; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. Better one day in Thy courts than a thousand in the houses of sinners; O Lord, O God of my salvation, I have cried out in the day and in the night before Thee. I am counted among them that go down into the pit; I am become as a man without help; but all the day I have cried out to Thee; I have stretched out my hands to Thee; O turn not Thy face away; in the day of my trouble, be near."

3. Or the spirit of Advent is to be found in the terrible loneliness expressed by the prophets, especially Jeremias and Isaias, who saw the world desolate and dreary, and men groping, stumbling, erring, falling, destroying themselves and their nations — waiting, longing, pleading for the Redeemer to come. Where the Redeemer is not known today there is the same devastation and despair; the mind projects itself into the midst of such sadness, and then realizes what it means that the coming of the Saviour is nigh.

Such thoughts make Advent the season of expectation and anticipation. In every heart that meditates thus there is renewed the joyousness of the angels and the shepherds and the Magi, and of Mary and Joseph on Christmas day.

THE DANGEROUS CROSS

A story over which you shall smile. And then you will remember that you have read or heard instances of as crass an ignorance as is demonstrated here.

E. F. MILLER

JOE ULMAN was an aviator — the kind you read about in magazine stories and see in the movies. In the course of his flying life he had been chief pilot for a well known airline, stunt flier for the pictures, and barnstormer for the fun of it. The last mentioned he was now, to which occupation he devoted himself with the same utter fearlessness, the same flare for the spectacular as had won for him the love of the masses in the past as well as the loss of his various jobs.

But Joe Ulman was also something that you do not read about in magazine stories or see in the movies: he was a recent convert to the Catholic faith. His conversion came through devious ways — through the inspiration of a girl on the ground called Julie whom he loved, and through the inexplicable magnificence and ordered existence of the stars in the heavens amidst which he had spent so many hours of his life. He could not look at the stars as he sailed between them without wondering who made them and what kept them on their path so faithfully. And he could not look at Julie as he talked with her and walked with her without marveling at the genius that could encompass such loveliness and such goodness in human form. It made him study that he might find the answer: the result was that he suddenly found himself in harmony with the stars and in unity of thought and faith with Julie — he found himself a Catholic.

Joe Ulman loved his newly-discovered faith passionately, for it seemed to give him the buoyancy of a parachute and the carefreeness of a bird. He felt now that if he spun out, it would not matter so much because the angels would catch him on the way down (at least his soul) and send him off to heaven on the nearest cloud lest he dash himself against a stone. (He studied the Bible too.) What happened to his silly body he did not care. He loved his new found faith more than anything in the world (even Julie) and was as enthusiastic for its spread as he was for flying upside down or doing inside loops.

That was why he was barnstorming around the country instead of flying across the ocean or over the North Pole — merely to spread the Catholic faith in the only way he knew how.

That was why he was checking over his engine so carefully one day last month when this strange tale began — merely because he had a very special mission to perform, and he did not want anything to go wrong in its accomplishment.

THE plane stood in the middle of a field that was empty and deserted. There was not a house or a human habitation within sight. There was nothing — except the plane and the stubbled field on which it stood. And there was nobody nearby to wonder why the plane was there, nobody at all except Joe himself — and his girl Julie.

Julie was dressed in coveralls, a leather helmet on her head, and a parachute bag slung loosely over her shoulders and down her back. She followed Joe around step by step as he checked the plane, seeming to be loathe to let him out of reaching distance even for a moment. Occasionally when he raised his head from the machinery in which he was buried she caught a glimpse of his face. It was a bronzed and lean face, roughened by many winds, its eyes half closed in a kind of perpetual squint, and its mouth sharply drawn in a line of determination that bespoke dangers and difficulties overcome and dangers and difficulties that were still to be met. The papers had carried some accounts of these dangers — how he had brought sick people to hospitals through storms and tempests that were fierce enough to blow down the very mountains over which he flew; how he had accomplished forced landings with a ship full of frightened passengers that no other pilot would have even dared; how he had conquered the oceans and encircled the earth. But that was all. The other things were unknown — particularly, the hardest of them all, becoming a Catholic.

His checking was over now, and after wiping his hands on the grass, he looked at Julie and said.

"You got that parachute on right?"

"I put it on just the way you told me to," she answered.

"Let's see." He examined it carefully. "You know what to do — how and when to pull the rip-cord if anything goes wrong?"

"Of course I do. But why the worry all of a sudden? I never knew you to worry before when it came to airplanes and such like.

You don't think we're going to fall down, do you?"

"Certainly not, little one. The only reason I'm making sure that everything goes right is because I love you. You are very lovable, you know. But here! We can't stand around all day telling each other stories, much as I'd like to. We've got work to do. Are all the bundles we brought along packed away in the plane?" He went over to the plane, opened the cabin door, and investigated.

"Joe," said Julie, "do you think that this thing you are planning will do any good? Won't people just think that we're crazy?"

"Let them think it. At least it will tell them that there's a solution for wars and dictators and all that sort of thing that they never thought about before. That's something, isn't it? Besides, Julie, a Catholic, which I am through your kind services and the grace of God, ought to be a crusader and a fighter, if you get what I mean. If he isn't, he's a funny kind of Catholic to my way of thinking. Now as I told you about a hundred times, we can't go out and write books and preach sermons and instruct people personally — we haven't the training for that. But we can do something, and that something we're going to do right now." He lifted Julie into his arms and deposited her in the cabin of the plane, right in the middle of the innumerable bundles and baskets of cardboard signs that were piled up to the ceiling. "Now you stay there," he continued, "and remember your assignment. I'll give you the signal when you should go to work. To the trenches, Julie, to the trenches! And don't shoot until you see the whites of the enemy's eyes." He climbed into the pilot's seat, gunned the engine, and began a steep climb for the atmosphere over the city.

AT A thousand feet they leveled off, and looked around. The city was below them in all the maze of streets and buildings and rushing. Joe turned to Julie.

"Now my dear, the time for attack has come. Give 'em the works." He brought the plane down to five hundred feet.

"I'm with you, general," answered Julie saluting, "in fact I'm right at your heels in the shadow of the flag you bear so bravely." She unloosened the bands on the nearest bundle and slowly and gruntingly poured its contents out of the window. The wind caught them, disengaged one piece from the other and sent them sailing serenely upon the streets and houses below. They looked like oversized snowflakes as

they fell—a thousand of them, a veritable storm of them, tumbling, turning, twisting down into the very laps of men and women who had never seen their like before except on the steeples of churches and above the graves in Catholic graveyards. They were crosses, miniature crosses on which was written the simple sentence: "In this cross shall you conquer."

"Good work, captain," shouted Joe. "Keep it up and the enemy will be ours." Julie did keep it up. For two hours she tugged and lifted and poured until her arms were limp and the cabin a shambles of torn paper, empty boxes, and tangled cord. Not until the last bundle had been disposed of did she look down to see the effect of her work. The crosses were still falling, and men and women were dodging them as though they were shells or bullets. There were crowds of people in the streets looking alternately at the plane and at the crosses they had picked up. Police cars and motorcycles were rushing about in an effort to follow the progress of the plane. Julie began to be frightened.

"It looks as though they're sort of mad at us," she said. "Maybe we had better get out of here."

Joe laughed. "They're not mad, darling—just surprised. They've never seen anything like this before, that's all. You've finished all the crosses, haven't you?" He looked around. "Well, let's be off then." He headed for the field from which they had taken off.

BUT the field was no longer deserted as it had been when they left it. It was filled with policemen (at least so it seemed), and people by the hundreds were rushing up from all sides. An officer stepped up as Joe helped Julie from the plane. A look of surprise and recognition came over his face.

"Was that you up there, Joe?" he asked. "What's got into you, anyway? The city's crazy, and the mayor told me to follow the fool who was causing such a commotion, and when he landed to lock him up in the jug."

"Lock him up in the jug?" echoed Julie. "What for? He didn't break any law."

"I don't know who you are, lady," the officer answered. "But I don't mind telling you the reason for the order. It's for disturbing the peace. It's for showering upon the city subversive propaganda. I guess you don't know what that is. I guess you don't know that there's a

war going on in Europe too. Well, there is, and we don't want to get into it. See? That's all."

"But how can what we did get us into a war?" she asked.

"Oh ho!" cried the officer. "So you were in on it also, huh? Well, you'll have to come along too, then — both of you. Sorry, Joe, but orders is orders. Just don't make any trouble, and nobody will know the difference." They fought their way through the crowd and into a squad car, and were soon roaring through the streets to the city hall.

JOE and Julie spent the night in jail, not uncomfortably and not without consideration on the part of the jailor whose name was George and who brought them a cup of chocolate to drink before the lights went out. After a refreshing sleep they were ushered into the presence of the mayor and three senators who had been hastily summoned from Washington to take part in the investigation. It was thought that possibly here would be uncovered the leaders themselves of a ring of international plotters. The room in which the meeting took place was crowded to the doors with reporters and irate citizens whose homes had been so wantonly attacked by the unprecedented air raid. On the faces of all there was a look of intense seriousness and quiet expectation. This thing had to be thrashed out thoroughly lest America fall prey to enemies before the very eyes of Americans. If such undemocratic and dictatorial activities were not crushed in the bud, they might lead the United States into a war, and into a war on the wrong side — on the side of the Fascists.

The mayor rapped for order. Clearing his throat and in his most ponderous manner he intoned for the benefit of the senators:

"Gentlemen: Never in my life (and I assure you I have traveled far) have I received so great a shock as I did yesterday morning when, on leaving the sanctuary of the city hall, I was struck on the shoulder by a blunt instrument (the same I hold in my hand and raise for all of you to see) which seemingly came from above, propelled by a hand that meant no good for God or country. I scanned the heavens to locate the culprit, and beheld descending a storm of missiles of a similar structure and nature falling upon our fair city, deluging it, I might add, to the depth of three or four inches. Only by agile dodging did I gain the doorway of the nearby building without being struck again. Then it was that I saw the plane zooming low over the city, and realized

that from it the attack was being made. Suspecting a plot, I immediately summoned the chief of police and gave him strict orders that the person or persons so engaged be summarily apprehended. They are before you in this room. I now place in your worthy hands the investigation of their unAmerican activities." He sat down amidst thunderous applause, and Senator Crutch, a tall, spare man with whiskers like those of a Chief Justice, arose to his feet and slowly began the investigation.

"Mr. Ulman," he began, "I presume you and the young lady here are citizens of the United States?"

"Yes, sir, both of us from several generations back. In fact my great grandfather fought on the Northern side in the civil war, and Julie's on the Confederate side. That's American, isn't it?"

"And your profession is that of aviator?"

"Right again."

"In what capacity do you fly airplanes?"

"In the capacity of an aviator, of course."

"I know, I know," said the senator impatiently. "But what position do you hold as an aviator?"

"Well, I'm not flying right now. But when I do fly, I usually hold an upright position." The crowd laughed discreetly.

"Mr. Ulman," said the senator severely, his beard bobbing up and down viciously, "you understand that we are not to be trifled with. This is serious, more serious than perhaps you understand."

"I never heard of anyone flying an airplane lying down or standing on his head," said Joe innocently, "if that is what you mean."

"Senator Crutch," cried out Senator Peets of the far west as he jumped to his feet, "we are attacking the problem from the wrong angle. Everyone knows the reputation that Mr. Ulman has as a skilled and famous flyer. We are wasting time in going into all that. To the point is what I say, and at once." He turned to Joe.

"Young man," he said, "how long have you been engaged in the activity of using your knowledge of aviation for the purpose of promoting some scheme or plan conceived by yourself or by others to the good or detriment of a business or of citizens who might witness your manoeuvres?"

"Two years ago I flew a sign behind my plane advertising Noodles Beer, the Baron of Beers. For that I received the golden cup award

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which is given each year to the best beer advertisement. Evidently the people didn't mind that."

"And is that all you did?"

"Not quite. I wrote smoke signs for some months telling the population the excellence of Grandpa Chewing Tobacco. For that cultural labor I was given the key to the city by the mayor himself, who incidentally sits right next to you there." He smiled at the mayor and bowed. "If I remember rightly, he said in his speech of presentation that I had made a definite contribution to civilization and the arts."

"I resent the allegation with its insidious insinuation," cried out the mayor from his chair.

"Be calm, mayor," said the third senator, Senator Croke from the South, who had been dozing quietly until this moment, and had been rather abruptly awakened by the mayor's snort. "Be calm. We have a dangerous mission to carry out this day, and self-control is essential." He faced Joe.

"My dear young man," he said, "just what were the missiles with which you showered the city in your mad adventure yesterday?"

"Only cardboard crosses," answered Joe.

"Crosses?" the senator asked. He picked up from the table the cross that the mayor had laid down. "And what do you mean by crosses? What is their significance?"

"Surely you know what the cross means," put in Julie. But Joe whispered sharply. "Stay out of this, Julie. Just hide behind me and perhaps they won't see you. These folks don't mean any good."

"Answer the question," said the mayor. "What is the secret significance of the cross?"

Senator Crutch once more rose creakingly to his feet. "Gentlemen," he said, "the question you ask is unnecessary. The cross of which you speak has various interpretations. Some say that it is but a fantastic form that had its origin in the mythologies of the Romans and to which spiritual meaning has been given by both ancient and modern cults. But in this case I think that it has a deeper meaning." He paused to allow his words to sink in properly. "I think that this cross is but a variation of the German swastika. For purposes of deception this man, who sits before you so innocently as though he were not steeped in the ways of trickery and chicanery, cut off the upturned ends of the Fascist symbol, and thought that thereby he could instill the poison of a foreign 'ism'

into the hearts of Americans without fear of detection or arrest. It is my considered opinion that he is a member of the bund."

"An international spy," supplemented Senator Peets.

"An agent of Hitler," added Senator Croke.

"A very learned interpretation of the meaning of the cross," concluded the mayor.

SILENCE greeted the hallowed words of the senators and the mayor. Then the reporters and the people were on their feet shouting and waving their arms. Pandemonium broke loose. "Kill the spies! Shoot 'em and shoot to kill! Down with the Fascists!" were but some of the demands that emerged from the lips of the citizens. But before actual violence could be done, Julie was standing in the front of the room facing the people. She was a pretty picture, her eyes flashing fire, her cheeks flushed with indignation, her lips parted in anger.

"Quiet," shouted the mayor. "Let the lady be heard."

"Ladies and gentlemen," began Julie quietly. "Today you have witnessed a scene of childish stupidity that is undoubtedly unsurpassed in the history of the world. You have heard public men express their ignorance of the meaning of the cross—the cross on which Christ died in order that men might stop going to war, and might begin to love one another as He loved them. Now, I'll tell you simply what we did. We dropped crosses on the city so that people might be reminded that peace can be maintained only through the love of Christ as that love was exemplified on the cross. In other words, peace can be maintained only through self-sacrifice, a forgetting of personal grudges, a destruction of prejudices and hatreds that generally arise from a misunderstanding of national characteristics and traditional habits of life; and this can be accomplished only through an understanding of Christ's cross, only through suffering and a supreme charity. We thought that we were doing our country a good turn, but it seems"—she could not keep the sarcasm from her voice—"as though we have only done our country harm." She sat down and the room was as quiet as though it were empty.

The three senators and the mayor looked at each other knowingly and at the prisoners sympathetically.

"An addled brain," said Senator Peets.

"Certainly a baleful influence," said Senator Croke.

"Unfortunate, unfortunate," said the mayor. "A victim of priests and hallucinations."

"I still maintain, international spies," interposed Senator Crutch. "The mystical words on the so-called cross are sufficient proof. You will notice that they speak of conquering. 'In this sign shall you conquer.' Conquer what, gentlemen? Why, our own country, of course, for which our forefathers fought and died. Consequently, I would suggest deportation, but they seem to be American citizens. Our only alternative is six months in the Federal prison at Atlanta. Besides their crime of propagandizing America with Fascist ideology, they flew too low over the city. We might suggest to the reporters that they give this in their papers as the reason for the condemnation. Otherwise the people might not understand our altruistic motives. We must educate them to that point of understanding, we must educate them more and more."

"Six months it is," said Senator Peets, Senator Croke and the mayor all in the same breath.

AND so amidst thunderous cries, catcalls, and bronx cheers, Joe and Julie, Christians and crusaders, were led away by policemen to begin their sentence in one of the prisons of the land of the free and the home of the brave—a fitting punishment for their effrontery in attempting to pollute the innocent public with the symbol of charity and love.

Motes and Beams

* In 1846 the Milwaukee common council adopted a measure "that no person shall keep within this city any billiard table, ball alley or any instrument of gaming upon or with which money or other articles shall in any manner be played for, under the penalty of \$25 for each and every offense." *

In 1939 various cities in the United States are tracking down the game called Bingo as they would track down a wild lion that escaped from the circus and was threatening the lives of countless citizens. "Leper" cry the cities at the very sight of a Bingo player. But divorce, war, and Godless education go on. Could it be that divorce, war and Godless education are not so bad as Bingo?

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

How can Catholics believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, when Mary herself, in the Magnificat, calls God her Saviour in the following words: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God and my Saviour?" This would seem to indicate that Mary was redeemed by Christ like everyone else.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception means that original sin never tainted the soul of Mary. However it was not Mary's own merits that obtained this freedom from original sin, but the merits of Christ her divine Son that gained it for her. Therefore it can be said of Mary as of every other human being that Christ was her Saviour: the difference between her and others is that from the first instant of her conception in the womb of her mother the fruits of redemption were applied to her.

Our knowledge of this doctrine is dependent, of course, upon the revealed teachings of God through Sacred Scripture and the logical interpretation of their meaning, and finally the definition of the church. When God said to Satan in the garden of Eden: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel," He evidently was revealing that Mary would never be under the power of Satan, as those conceived and born with original sin are until the stain is removed. Likewise, in this uniting of the Redeemer and His mother on the part of God, there is given the reason for Mary's freedom from original sin: viz., that she who was to cooperate so closely with the Son of God in destroying the power of Satan, should never for an instant be allowed to lie under that power herself. But it must always be remembered that the Immaculate Conception of Mary was a privilege bestowed by and through the merits of her Son.

MEDITATION ON CHRISTMAS

Pessimists and alarmists have had a busy year predicting dire things. But thank God we still have Christmas, the well-spring of universal hope for man.

C. DUHART

ALARMISTS have long been predicting the destruction of our civilization. Pessimists, blinding their eyes to all but the sombre hues of human society, have long been chanting the dirge of western culture.

It must be admitted that the alarmists have some grounds for their alarm, and the pessimists some basis for their pessimism. In the social body of our own country are planted germs of corruption which threaten to enter the blood stream and so poison the whole system. And the gravest danger lies in this, that these germs are not recognized for what they are, real seeds of destruction, but instead are imagined to be evidences of a strong life and vigorous growth.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the approbation of law in the several states has made the practice of divorce the raging, rampant, destructive force it is today to the fundamental institution of social life. Again, the public officials of our country have shown so little active antagonism in the question of artificial birth control, that a recent article defending with sentimental arguments the practice of artificial birth control could parade under the title of "The Case for the State." Under various specious defences another mal-practice is to-day clamoring for approval, and has already won some favorable recognition — the matter of outright murder which masquerades under the euphemistic name of "mercy killing," the practice which puts out of existence those who according to some omniscient mind are beyond the reach of possible cure, and suffer "intolerable and useless" pain.

Sporadic objections have been raised to such tendencies in human society. But it is true to say that almost the only voice which has been raised insistently and consistently against divorce and artificial birth control and all the other evils in this country has been the voice of the Catholic Church. Her appeal has been not only to the inspired word of God and century-old and sane tradition, but also to the evidence

which stares out from the pages of history that such practices spell the destruction of civilization. But being almost alone in her contentions, the Catholic Church has only merited to hear herself described as being "behind the times, blindly reactionary, anti-progressive."

These seeds of corruption, already referred to, are not the only causes which lead thinking men to fear for our culture. There is the terrible mal-adjustment which persists in the whole social relationship of property-owners and proletariat, employers and working-men, rich and poor. Here again the Church has pointed out the danger and the remedy — but here we cannot say that she has stood alone. Some advances have been made toward a betterment of conditions. At least it has been recognized that a dangerous state of affairs exists, a state of affairs which cries out for speedy amelioration. The peril here has been seen by some public officials, and thank God, some progress has been made, although many laborers still bear upon their shoulders what Leo XIII called a burden little less heavy than slavery itself.

There is no doubt that our civilization is in a precarious condition especially with the European War adding its threat to all the other disruptive forces which tend toward destruction.

BUT through all the gloom, there shines one brilliant light of hope, hope for our country. That hope lies in the fact that the great national feast of the United States is still the feast of Christmas. True, some people do not observe the feast of Christmas. Others observe it for the wrong reason, supposing that it is only one of the ancient pagan nature festivals which survived to this day, whereas it really placed the axe to the root of the pagan festivals. Still others enter into the spirit of Christmas on this one day, and then during the rest of the year act and live as if Christ was never born into the world to shed upon it the new light of Christianity and all it stands for. But it would be folly to forget the multitudes who observe Christmas in all its meaning of love and happiness.

The observance of the feast of Christmas is the hope of our civilization. There is no hope for civilization in Russia today, because there Christmas is no longer commemorated — no hope unless a great change of conduct should grip the minds and hearts of those who feel they can do without Christ and God. It will not do to appeal in rebuttal to ancient Athens and ancient Rome and say that they made up great

civilizations and cultures even though they were pagan. There is as much difference between paganism which was before Christ, and that which is after Christ, between paganism which was in a way a preparation for Christianity, and paganism which is a decay of Christianity, as there is between the man who never went up in an airplane and the man who having flown into the air, and pierced the clouds, had his plane burst into flames and come crashing down to earth.

No man can celebrate the feast of Christmas and disassociate it entirely from Christ, just as no one can speak sanely of Christianity without referring it to Christ, though some try to do so, when they prescribe for Christianity, forgetting that Christ gave the complete prescription capable of preserving Christianity in His Church until the very end of time. "Christ" is the largest and the most important part of "Christmas" and "Christianity."

By keeping close to Christmas we must naturally keep close to Christ, and therein lies the hope of our salvation not only in eternity but also in time. At Christmas time, even the most rugged of individualists, even the hardest of hard business men sometimes feel the spirit of Christ upon them, and show that even they can be a bit tender at the edges.

LOOKING at Christmas and with Christmas, naturally and necessarily at Christ also in the stable, men see the most perfect example of the two virtues which form the columns of the temple of Social Justice. They see that perfect act of Justice, by which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God, becomes man, to pay off to the finest point of indebtedness the infinite debt which lay charged up against mankind. They see that perfect act of charity which even surpasses Christ's own expression, "Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friend," for here is evidence of a God Who loved His friend so exceedingly as to take up a life for him, only to lay it down again in the great offering of Calvary.

Looking at Christ, men must notice all those strange paradoxes of His entrance into the world. They see how His Mother, the Queen, is not received into the homes of her subjects. They see the King Himself born in and abandoned stable, and laid in the royal bed — a manger. They see Him surrounded by His courtiers — the ox and the ass. They see ambassadors come thronging to pay him homage — the shepherds

from the hilltop, clothed in their homespun garments, the poorest of the poor, the simplest of the simple, men at home only among their sheep.

Christianity and Christ on their very birth-day — they were both born together — unfurled their new standard and flung it up into the sky for all to see, and upon it were written all those new scales of values which were to turn the world upside down.

The greatest paradox of all was the very existence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Had some all-knowing "mercy-killer" seen the external misery of their lives — Joseph working from morn till night, pounding out a bare existence with hammer and nails — Mary pierced with a seven-fold sword of sorrows — Jesus, the Man of Sorrows from the cradle to the grave — he might have seen in them the fittest of subjects for the practice of his trade and dispatched them out of existence. And in so doing, the "mercy-killer" would have killed mercy, and by that token murdered the human race.

Looking upon Christ in the stable and caught by the wonder of it all, men must look beyond the stable to see what became of that Child. They must follow Him down the thirty years of His hidden life, through the three years of His teaching into the awful gloom of His passion and death and burial, on into the brilliant noon-day light of His glorious resurrection. And all along the route, they meet with snatches of His teachings, with examples of His life, which shattered all the standards of the pagan world He conquered, and would shatter today all the standards of a reincarnate paganism if they were learned anew. Astonishing slogans and maxims fall upon their ears — "Blessed are the poor in spirit," when all the world of His day thought and all the world of today thinks that these are cursed beyond measure; "Blessed are they that mourn," when the old paganism wanted to deal only with those that laughed, and the new paganism today would consign them to the tender mercies of the "mercy-killers"; "Blessed are you when men shall persecute you for my Name's sake," when Rome and Greece were indifferent enough about religion to consider it a matter of no moment, and the modern world calls out for a Christianity entirely divorced from the maxims of Christ and the dogmas of His Church.

THEN there were the paradoxes of action. The wise and rich of the world passed by, and the poor, simple, ignorant fishermen

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chosen in their stead to be His Apostles — the Scribes and Pharisees, the moral, intellectual and political leaders of the nation, scorned and lashed with fiery, indignant words from His Divine lips, and the poor Chanaanite woman praised and rewarded for her humble faith — the would-be righteous told that they were "whited sepulchres" and the poor, repentant sinners pressed to His loving heart — the happy, eager conversations with the children, and the stern silence preserved before King Herod. Finally, the terrific paradox of the great Conqueror Who won His mighty victory over death by dying, to Whom the scourge which tore His flesh to shreds, the nails which fastened Him helpless to His gibbet, the cross which bore His lifeless Body, were only powerful weapons by means of which He won His way to an everlasting victory.

Since the first Christmas day, life and the values of life have undergone a complete change. It is almost as if some madman had taken the whole composite of human existence, turned it upside down and said, "From now on, top will be bottom, and bottom will be top." Only it was no madman but Infinite Wisdom Himself Who completely altered the standards and values of life, and proved He was not acting unreasonably by leading the new life Himself.

History has borne out Christ's teaching of the exaltation of the humble, sometimes so clearly that the most biased observer could not deny the evidence before his eyes. Near the close of the last century, a tiny rose unseen by the world was budding in a Carmelite garden in the little town of Lisieux, France. No one in the outside world knew of it — they were busy about so many important things. Scarcely 25 years later, the name of the Little Flower, St. Therese, was known and loved and honored in every corner of the globe. Who can recall the name of the ruler of France, the names of its great ones, when the tiny flower blossomed alone and unseen? Their names are buried in the dust of the history books. St. Therese's name is written in the annals of God's great Saints.

We are living today in an age of publicity, an age of specialists, an age which some would have us believe is revolving around a dozen great luminaries — an age which they say is made glorious by great scientists, politicians, movie stars and the rest. They are wrong. The really great people in the world are in many cases: the ordinary mother and father who serve God with all their hearts, who see in their chil-

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dren the pearls of priceless worth entrusted to them by God; the young man and woman who wish to enter the state of life God has chosen for them, and who are preparing for it by lives of purity and observance of His commandments; the children so dear to the heart of God; those who are buried away from the eyes of an appraising world, but do their bit for civilization and for God by performing their simple duties faithfully and conscientiously. And among these truly great are the simple, the poor, the suffering and even sometimes, the sinner shunned as an outcast by the world, who has achieved greatness by sincere repentance.

IT IS because of the first Christmas day, and the Christ Who made and makes the feast glorious, Who sheds His light of glory and happiness through the centuries, that no single human being need look up to any king, any ruler, any president, any fabulously rich magnate, any world-famous man or woman as to a creature of another and a higher world. It is because of the first Christmas that the gates of happiness are closed to no one. It is because, in celebrating the feast of Christmas, men recall the first Christmas and all it means to the human race that there is hope for our civilization.

Old Things That Are Best

There is nothing new about a Christmas tree. But that only makes it the lovelier.

There is nothing new about children's delight in Santa Claus. But that does not take away from the charm of their belief.

There is nothing new about wreaths hanging in windows. But that does not make them any less a welcome sight.

There is nothing new about children hanging up their stockings. But that does not take away from the appeal of those limp, empty stockings, hanging up so expectantly.

There is nothing new about members of a family being together for Christmas. But that does not take away from its deep joyousness.

There is nothing new about Christmas wishes and greetings. But that does not make them any less cheery.

There is nothing new about Christmas presents. But that does not make them any less interesting.

There is nothing new about tinsel and decorations and red ribbon and silver string. But that does not make them any less gay and decorative.

There is nothing new about Christmas. But there is no day like it in all the year.

MOMENTS AT MASS

The Gradual

F. A. BRUNNER

It was the custom in the Jewish synagogue service to vary the monotonous reading of passages from the Bible by singing psalms. A vestige of this practice is the insertion in the Mass of the *Gradual* and other chants between the Epistle and the Gospel. Unlike the *Introit*, these chants are not processional songs, intended to fill in a time of distracting activity. They are rather pauses for reflective meditation on what has been read; their purpose is to reinforce the living sentiments so far uttered and to elevate the mind in preparation for the message to come.

In the Mass today there are four different types of such chants: Graduals, Alleluiaic Responds, Tracts, and Sequences. Of these the *Gradual* assumes especial importance because it is one of the earliest elements of the liturgy, and because it forms the nucleus of the whole collection of Mass chants which is consequently called a *Graduale*.

1. The Name. — The word "gradual" — in England they use the word "grail" — comes from the Latin word *gradus*, a step, because this song was originally chanted either from the altar step or from the step of the pulpit. In earlier times this chant was simply called a *responsory* or *respond*, from the manner of execution.

2. The Method of Singing. — As the name "respond" implies, the Gradual was usually sung as a psalm verse with refrain. In the official choral book of the Church, the *Graduale Vaticanum*, two methods of singing the Gradual are described. In one the soloist merely intones both refrain and verse, and the choir chimes in to complete the chant. This method of execution grew up in the later middle ages. In the other method, the true ancient responsorial form is followed: the refrain is sung by the soloist and the choir repeats it; then the soloist sings the psalm verse, after which the choir once more repeats the refrain.

3. Historical Development. — The Gradual took definite shape not later than the fifth century. The earlier responsory singing may have been of a less elaborate kind, enabling the congregation to join in. But as the singing schools developed, the music became more embellished, so that only a skilled choir was capable of executing the part formerly allotted to the people. Artistically and emotionally the chant is probably at its very height in this part of the Mass. Text and melody concur to present lofty thoughts to a mind preparing to hear the words of Christ in the Gospel.

DEVELOPING YOUR CHARACTER, III

Easily the most difficult to apply of all the principles on which true character rests, is this third and last in the series. Greatness can be found right here.

D. F. MILLER

NO MAN can be said to be a man of character unless his internal and external activities are dominated by the principles that represent the truth about the nature and relationships of man. Some men live by the principle that man is merely an animal, with the same necessary subservience to passion (but without the safeguards of brute instinct) as the animals; the result is that they create havoc among their friends and acquaintances and soon destroy themselves, and all who knew them comment (if the truth can be spoken) over their graves that they were men utterly without character. Others live by the principle that each man is a god, subject to no authority above him, capable of ruling as he pleases those beneath him, self-sufficient enough to make his own laws. Such men usually come to violent ends, and the verdict is given that their lack of character made new enemies every time they spoke or acted.

True character is based on truth. No man can rise above his intellectual convictions in the conduct of his life. If his intellectual convictions embrace truth, he has the only foundation of a good life and strong character. That is why, as has been seen, the first two principles of character involve man's relationship to God and to the world. Man is made by God and for God and with responsibility toward God; until he makes that truth a conviction, his character will be flabby and weak. Man is made for another world than the present one, and the present world is only a place of preparation for the next. Any man who is not convinced of that will show a character as unsteady and unpredictable as the vagrant winds.

THE third principle without which true character can never be developed is that which expresses the true relationship between a man and his fellow-men. The world is full of false principles of conduct in this regard. Some men follow the principle of Cain, the nega-

tive principle that they are not their brother's keeper, that they have no duties and no responsibilities toward their neighbor, that it is "every man for himself, etc." How few realize that the principle was invented by Cain as a cover-up for a murder, and that its use always creates the suspicion of another murder or some equally vicious crime. For the truth is that it is impossible for man to live utterly alone and independent of all his neighbors. He accepts much from others, and in return he either gives or he hurts, he either helps others to live or he hastens their death. The man who says he lives by the principle of "everybody for himself" is either an ignoramus or a charlatan constantly covering up his evil deeds. At any rate you will never find one such displaying strength of character in any sense of the word.

Others proclaim vigorously that the principle they follow is one of justice and justice alone. "Give to men that give," "be kind to those who are kind to you," "treat everybody according to his just deserts," "love your friends and hate your enemies." There are few principles that can make life so uncomfortable both for their holders and for others than this. Those who are convinced that they must follow the principle become touchy, fickle, sour, embittered, revengeful and intolerant. The longer they cling to it, the more violent they become against real and imaginary enemies. Those who enjoy their favor for a while have to be constantly on guard: they must beware of "stepping on their toes" even accidentally or unconsciously; for every kindness received they have to pay with effusive gratitude, multiplied return favors, and obsequious flattery. The "love-your-friends-hate-your-enemies" character is usually loved by no one, unless you can call that love which induces self-interested sycophants to play on the weaknesses of such persons and obtain from them whatever they desire. But love without forgiveness, love based on justice alone, is a contradiction in terms, and nothing makes us say more quickly of a man: "his character is very weak and unloveable."

A third principle that governs more men than are willing to admit it in their relationship with others might be called the principle of caste. They are convinced that human beings are divided essentially into different classes, and whatever they call them, they mean into an upper and lower class. Those who hold the principle always believe that they themselves belong to the upper class. The members of the lower class must be treated kindly, affably, even generously at times, but they must

be kept in their class. If they are laborers (all of whom, of course, belong to the lower class) that is their everlasting and immutable destiny; to them belong by decree of nature small wages, cramped homes, lack of opportunity for advancement, and the privilege of being servants to members of the upper class. Just as it is by an act of God that they, the members of the upper class have an income of \$20,000 a year, so it is, they believe, an act of God that the lower classes receive \$20 a week. To try to change that is to strike at the very foundations of the world. Yet one must be kind to the lower classes. One gives away dimes or nickels with abandon; one gives \$100 a year to community chest funds so that bread and beans can be bought for those who are out of work; one tries to help the poor laborers to live thriftily and happily, to stretch \$20 a week as far as possible. But when all is said and done the class distinctions must be maintained. And in their smug, patronizing, happy-go-lucky way, men who live by such principles have been responsible for more wars and revolutions than any other factor in the history of the world.

THERE is only one real principle regarding one's fellowman that can constitute character and that is the principle that enunciates the truth. The true principle is this:

Every man is my brother under the fatherhood of God; I must love him as he is loved by God; I must love him as I love myself.

In order to live by this principle there are certain obstacles and difficulties that must be cleared away. The first is the tendency to accept the verdict of the bodily eyes as to the worth of our neighbor instead of the estimate of Almighty God. To the bodily eyes some men appear as ugly and deformed; others as tramps and ne'er-do-wells; others as scamps and evil-doers. A man of character knows that what his eyes see is unimportant; that what really matters is the fact that his fellow man has a soul which God created and which He loves with an infinite love. The second obstacle to the operation of the true principle about one's fellow-men is the potency of feelings. The feelings like to accept one man for love and another for hatred; the feelings are changeable, moving one to kindness today and to harshness tomorrow; the feelings are tyrannical — reacting automatically to what pleases and displeases

them in the neighbor. The man of character knows that his feelings are part of his animal nature, and that man was created to rule himself not by feelings but by knowledge and will.

When the obstacles have been removed, or rendered impotent to influence one's attitude towards others, the principle enunciated above can begin to operate. The man of character knows that God directly created every human soul, that God desires its everlasting happiness with an infinite desire; that God offers every means compatible with the freedom of man to make everlasting happiness attainable; that God bears with insults and injury from human beings and still desires their salvation; that God forgives readily and eagerly all who have wronged Him. More than that, the man of character knows that God expects men to help Him bring every soul to everlasting happiness, regardless of race, nationality, social condition or previous depravity, and this particularly and proportionately in regard to those with whom they are brought into contact. All men are brothers under God, but each must help especially the brothers who are nearest to him in life, not only near by affection, but near by the mere accident of circumstance or locality.

ON THIS basis the man of character sees himself bound by an inexorable law to do everything in his power to help his neighbor save his soul and to avoid everything that would render that task more difficult for anyone whom he may meet. There is nothing quite so remarkable in life as the infinite variety of ways in which the remembrance of this obligation influences the conduct of a man of character. It makes him friendly with tramps, even when he has to refuse them a handout, because he knows that a friendly word can help to elevate a man whereas a harsh word can embitter him in his sins. It makes him forgive the most vicious of his enemies, because he sees in a man's unjust deeds primarily the sin committed against God and not the harm done to himself, and he knows that his forgiveness may lead the man to seek forgiveness from God. Moreover he remembers how often he has been forgiven by God, and therefore cannot act less magnanimously towards his own enemies who have offended him less grievously than he has offended God. It makes him constantly conscious of his responsibilities towards those who are under his authority or united to him by ties of blood or affection: in regard to these he must be a positive influence for good, an example, a teacher, a guide, an inspira-

tion, yes, and at times a corrector, otherwise he is failing in a very positive way.

It should not be thought that this principle is too elevated for practical effectiveness in the routine affairs of daily life. As a matter of fact, it is the only principle that can impregnate the routine relationships between man and man with consistent charity. For the man of character knows that he is loving his fellow-man as God loves him when he loves him as he loves himself. That means that he gives to his fellow-man what he loves to receive himself. There is no man whose heart is not warmed by a friendly smile, a cheery word, a helping arm, an encouraging pat in a discouraging situation, a quick word of forgiveness for a thoughtless or even malicious unkindness, an offer of material help when circumstances are straitened. Every one of these things gives the soul a "lift" even though they seem to be trifles, and are directed mainly to the body. It is a simple truth that man is helped in saving his soul for eternity when his fellow-man adds to his peace and comfort in this life. The man of character knows this, and does not neglect the humblest of means for making life more comfortable for his fellow-man, that his soul may be comfortable in eternity.

WITH this principle one cannot be a "lone-wolf," living by and for himself; nor a petty tyrant proclaiming a great love of justice in order that his enemies, or those whom he dislikes, may be properly discomfited; nor a believer in "caste," as if there were no object to be gained in actually supporting a fuller, happier earthly life for those who have been underprivileged by oppression. In the full sense of the words of St. Paul, such a man becomes "all to all," giving everything of himself that can make eternal happiness possible and easy for his fellow-man.

Wherever there have appeared men who followed the principle elaborated here, the world has given its verdict; they were men of strong and sterling character. Such men have renewed the face of the earth; have destroyed slavery; have banished cruelty; have elevated their fellows; have spread happiness and peace wherever they appeared. And almost without exception they have found it necessary to accept Christ as their teacher and as their model, because without His clear-cut words and His shining example, the world, in its inherited selfishness, would have found it impossible to adopt the high principle of

loving one's neighbor as oneself.

All who would have strong characters today must know Christ and His teaching; must draw upon the infinite inspiration of His example; and must be ready to conquer purely human feelings and human judgments and see their fellow-man through the eyes of God.

— Ex-nun Tells All —

One more libelous attack on convents has been published recently by the Dent Publishing Co. of England, a firm that used to have a high reputation. The book that now places it in the class of cheap, unscholarly, bigoted firms is called *The Convent*, and is written by an Alyse Simpson who claims to write from experience in the convent she describes. Catholics who know only the rudiments of their faith will be highly amused at the evidences of Alyse Simpson's ignorance of even the ordinary terms of Catholic life. Here are some of the "howlers" the book contains:

"Every morning, after being awakened (in a convent located in Switzerland) by an English ejaculation, the nuns went to the dining room for morning prayers."

"After morning prayers, they went to church for Mass, and as they 'floated down the aisle' they heard the priest 'with the Caruso-like voice' sing *Ite Missa est*." (Note: *Ite missa est* means "Go, the Mass is ended.")

"There was Benediction every night, and at the end of it they sang *Tantum ergo pretiosis*—our favorite tune."

"When Extreme Unction was administered to the dying, the air was thick with incense and the priest murmured: '*Miseratus tui omnipotens Deus et dissimulus peccatis tuis perducit te ad vitam aeternam*.'" (If an altar boy were to get off such garbled Latin he would be straightway dismissed.)

The nuns often had vespers, which the ex-nun insists consisted of "coffee, a dish of prunes, dry bread, no butter, no sugar, no jam."

A Catholic child could have told the Dent Publishing Co. that Miss Simpson did not know what she was talking about. Yet this is the blurb with which they offer the book to the public: "The authentic story of a young girl's life in a convent where no rumor of the outside world obtrudes, and where the mad cries of these Brides of Heaven expire on the unheeding air. Aside from its poetic and artistic appeal, it is a unique and important document, which should help to open the eyes of a careless public to the true happenings that take place behind the barred grills of these fateful buildings."

Catholic Anecdotes



LEAVE IT TO PRAYER

Some years ago a lady who was on her way to Lourdes suddenly discovered that she had lost her ticket. It is customary in France to examine or collect the tickets while the train is in full motion. Notwithstanding the presence of sundry unbelieving commercial travelers and others likely to make fun of her, the lady knelt down and with the simplicity of a child besought St. Anthony to find the ticket, the loss of which was a serious expense as well as annoyance and inconvenience.

"Ah!" exclaimed one of those present, "likely St. Anthony can find it."

"I suppose," added another, "you expect, madam, that he will kindly hand it to you through the window."

"And if he wished to do so he could, gentlemen," replied the lady with spirit.

"Ah, we'll see if you do not have to pay," said the third.

A few moments passed, during which the men aired their wit, while the lady quietly continued to implore St. Anthony's help. Still the careful search of the carriage and of her own pockets confirmed her fear that the ticket was utterly lost, and when the guard suddenly put his head in at the window with the usual, "Tickets, please," the eyes of the scoffers were fixed triumphantly on the lady, who was obliged to answer: "I have lost my ticket."

"Ah, it is you, madame," exclaimed the guard, "who booked from N —, because that ticket was picked up, and we have had a telegram about it. It is all right."

With these words he wrote a pass on a slip of paper and handed it to the lady. The men present were struck dumb with confusion, which certainly was not lessened when the lady said, with a quiet smile:

"You see, gentlemen, that St. Anthony found no difficulty in sending me a ticket through the window."

BIRTHDAY TRANSFER

An understanding, sympathetic heart is always a sign of greatness even though there be no other title to the name. A genius can be as

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small as a blade of grass; "the man with the hoe" can be as mighty as the mountains.

Robert Louis Stevenson had high genius. But he was not great on that score alone. The *Green Bay Press-Gazette* makes the point.

"When Stevenson went to Samoa to find a cure for tuberculosis, he met a certain Mr. Ide, who represented the United States as consul. During his conversations with Mr. Ide, he learned that the latter had a little daughter back in Vermont, whose birthday was on Christmas day. This struck Mr. Stevenson as altogether unjust to any child. He took occasion, therefore, to write this little girl and, with much ceremony and flourish, to transfer to her his own birthday. He recited in due legalistic manner that Annie H. Ide, being 'born out of all reason upon Christmas Day,' and he himself having attained an age when 'I have no further use for a birthday of any description,' he considered it meet and just to transfer his birthday privileges to the young lady in order that she should have as many days as others through childhood when she could expect the thrill of gifts or the equal thrill of sitting at a birthday banquet and being toasted and caressed as the star of the hour.

"When a busy invalid, wracked with pain and gripped with fatigue, will take time off to write a little girl thousands of miles away in the manner of this Stevenson gesture, it may not be so difficult to understand why those who knew him have never forgotten him."

GENEROSITY

Archbishop Feehan, late Archbishop of Chicago, acquired a reputation for generosity. He was well known to the men who used to help people with their baggage at the depots, for he was generous in his "tips." He acted in the same manner with the servants at hotels and often said, "A few cents extra means so little to us, whilst it makes them happy and the next priest will receive better attention."

When at table in a hotel he always tipped the waiter at the beginning of the meals. When asked why he reversed the usual order, he answered:

"Well, they know they have it, and if satisfied will serve me with greater zest than if in doubt." Then with a smile he would add, "It is entirely proper to keep Novices on probation, but not waiters."

Pointed Paragraphs

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

No words fashioned by a literary genius or composed by the greatest intellect in the world could have the force, as a Christmas message to mankind, that invigorates the words of Pope Pius XII in his first great encyclical to the whole world. Mankind needs a Christmas message as it has seldom needed it since the angels sang at Bethlehem. And it is with the viewpoint of the centuries and the authority of Christ Himself that Pius XII speaks these ringing words:

"For true though it is that the evils from which mankind suffers today come in part from economic instability and from the struggle of interest regarding a more equal distribution of the goods which God has given man as a means of sustenance and progress, it is not less true that their root is deeper and more intrinsic, belonging to the sphere of religious belief and moral convictions which have been perverted by the progressive alienation of the peoples from that unity of doctrine, faith, customs, and morals which once was promoted by the tireless and beneficent work of the church. If it is to have any effect, the re-education of mankind must be, above all, spiritual and religious. Hence it must proceed from Christ, as from its indispensable foundation, must be actuated by justice and crowned by charity."

To all the blind and groping leaders of the human race, to all the puny scientists who have painted roseate pictures of new eras of unadulterated prosperity for man created by science sans religion, only to find the next month's or the next year's events mocking their dreams, to all the pessimists and skeptics and writers of epitaphs for civilization, the Pope's words offer the one thing that they have never considered, the only thing that can renew hope in human hearts, viz., a return to the stable at Bethlehem, a return to Christ, a return to the humble recognition of the authority of God.

Let this Christmas, coming as it does in the midst of warfare and suffering, rededicate every Christian to the service of Christ and the spread of His teachings and His love. Let it make us pledge ourselves to the task of carrying the Holy Father's words into every corner

of the land — that here at least men of good will may know the peace that passeth understanding.

CRIBS AND CHRISTMAS TREES

Our poor Protestant friends lost many beautiful things when they decided to go off on their own, back in the 16th century. They lost the crosses from their churches and Him Who hung upon the cross from within their churches. Are they better off in consequence?

But one of the most beautiful things they lost was the crib that can be found in every Catholic church on Christmas day the world over. Just how they consider the crib a means of idolatry or a violation of the first commandment is hard to understand. I think that it is safe to say, they don't — at least those sincere Protestants who do not make statements until they have studied all the facts. Why then are they opposed to the beautiful though innocent idea of the crib?

It is not because the crib is too loud a cry to the emotions, for most Protestant sects are based on emotion, on a "movement of the spirit as a result of the coming of the Holy Ghost into the heart." In fact the emotional reaction to such a divine visit is the test or the proof of salvation.

Neither can their "I do not choose to run" attitude towards cribs be because they consider the setting up of a crib childish and something that appeals only to children. Certainly Protestants will not want to say in our hearing that there are no longer any children in their churches; surely they will not readily admit in anybody's presence that Our Lord's words are not for them, or that they mean something else than they actually say: "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." I believe that Protestants lay special claim to the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore they must also, logically, lay claim to all the simplicity, unsophistication, and unworldliness of children.

Why then do Protestants refuse to have anything to do with the Christmas crib? I would willingly lay a wager of any amount that even the minister's parlor is adorned with a Christmas tree on Christmas morning as the children come trooping down stairs to find out what Santa has brought. The reason is obvious: the Christmas tree reminds the children of the preciousness of the feast being celebrated. Thus Catholics do not have to look very far to find that Protestants have just as firm a belief in signs and symbols and in old-fashioned

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scenes as they themselves. All men, if they are truthful, have to admit that these things help the imagination and the mind to see and to grasp the significance of events that otherwise would be lost in the dust of fallen centuries.

Could not a crib in a church, be it ever so humble, do this salutary work better than all the Christmas trees in the world, insofar as the crib actually recreates the scene that took place those many years ago on Bethlehem's hillside?

THE IRONY OF IT ALL

A release received from the *American Youth Commission* in Washington is one of the greatest indictments of an American institution from a federal bureau we have ever read. The institution is that of the non-religious, purely secular, public educational system of the nation, and the indictment is in the form of an apodictical statement that democracy cannot survive without religion.

So far as we know, there is only one Catholic on the *American Youth Commission*, and the release we have at hand is not prepared by him. Here is one of the startling (to the advocate of purely secular education) statements made:

"It is significant that every attack by contemporary tyrannical governments on human rights has begun with an assault on religion. Those who see human beings as nothing more than creatures of the State, and pawns in a cynical game for power, begin their attempt to dehumanize men and women by destroying all contact with the Divine. Yet it is everlastingly true that man does not live by bread alone. Bread is only a means to an end, the end being the progressive improvement of that which in men and women is truly human: their competence in the realm of the ultimate values in life."

What does an educational system that prohibits the mention of God or religion do but destroy in its children "all contact with the divine?" What does it do but make bread, earthly bread, the bread that perishes, seem the most important thing in life because it teaches nothing but how children are to earn their daily bread when they grow to manhood and womanhood? What is it then but, in the words of the Youth Commission, a subtle blow at democracy, because it leaves out the only thing that can make for "competence in the realm of the ultimate values of life?"

The bitter irony of it all! We take religion away by law, and then

discover that its lack is the source of every evil any nation has ever known. We penalize the only schools that teach religion, and then say that every assault on religion is the first step in a tyrannical movement to destroy a government. Where, as a nation, have we left our common sense?

TALKING TO THE DEAD

Every now and then someone makes a test of the possibility of talking to the souls of the dead. Not long ago, the wife of Harry Houdini, famous magician who by natural means could duplicate the mysterious feats of any spiritualistic medium in the world, announced that she and her husband had made a pact before his death that if it were possible, they would communicate with one another across the great divide. She admits now that having tried to fulfil the pact for ten years, nothing happened.

In the case of the Houdinis the experiment was meant to be no more than a refutation of the religion of the spiritualists, which is based on the theory that the dead talk to the living as an ordinary thing. But sometimes irreligious men set up tests by which they maintain that they can prove to the world whether there is any life after death at all.

William James, famous unbelieving philosopher, before his death left a secret message locked in a safe, and promised to tell someone what the message was if he were able to do so after his death. Then they were to unlock the safe at a given time and ascertain whether it was really he who had communicated with them. The inference was that if he did not succeed in putting the message across, they need not believe in life after death. Needless to say, James never communicated with anybody after he died.

Strange it is that even reputable thinkers should not be able to see the inadequacy of such a test as a proof or disproof of life after death. The whole cluster of truths surrounding the doctrine of immortality indicates that, as man is not his own master in life, neither will he be after death; that life is an individual's preparation for eternity, and that in eternity God will deal with him as his life deserved. That he should be permitted to come back and whisper messages to those he left behind is a matter that rests entirely in the hands of God. And certainly God will not destroy the value of faith among the living, nor their freedom of choice, by ordinarily letting those whose lives

have been a failure or success, come back to tell their friends all about the next world. Now and then God does permit a great saint to come back and reveal something to a soul, but He does that only enough to support and strengthen ordinary men's reasons for believing.

The rich man in the Gospel wanted to come back out of hell and tell his brothers about the awful pain in store for them. But God said: They have the Scriptures and the prophets; if they reject these they will not believe a soul coming to them out of the depths of hell. So with the skeptics of today: having rejected Christ and the Scriptures, a whole regiment of message-bearing souls from the land of the dead would not be able to convince them that they are wrong.

MARRIED SCHOOL TEACHERS

The thought processes of American moulders of public opinion are sometimes about as deep and penetrating as a college sophomore's generalizations about topics like war and religion. Examples are abundant and would make an excellent book of models on how not to think. But as good an example as you will find anywhere came out a few weeks ago on the editorial page of a top-notch (in popularity) magazine.

The editor bursts into a grand passion against those who have raised their voices against permitting married women to have jobs as teachers in public schools. With infantile naivete, he accuses almost every agitator against married teachers of motives of undiluted self-interest: they all have unattached female relatives with dubious intellectual attainments, whom they are anxious to take off home relief and thrust into the positions of the ousted married teachers. The heat of the accusation is so intense that it lights the flame of a suspicion that the editorial writer's wife is a school teacher, whose income her husband hates to lose.

But such personal piffle is utterly beside the whole point. We recognize, like all sensible people, that there are circumstances wherein a married woman has a sound reason for working — in a class room, or a five-and-ten-cent store or in a factory. But that is and must always be looked on as the exception. A married woman's job is to make a home, to raise a family, to prepare her own progeny for honest, intelligent, successful living. Teaching eight or ten hours a day or working any place else is absolutely incompatible with the task God and nature have given her.

Your pagan editor will say: Suppose she doesn't want children of

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her own? Then, we answer as a Christian, she is a selfish, hypocritical mockery of a wife, and the less such a woman has to do with other people's children, the better off they and society will be. Let her grow neurotic in her self-containment; let her have the long empty hours on her hands and do what she will with them — but don't let her spread her selfishness among others.

Or, it will be said, why not let her hire a maid for her own children and keep her job in the school. That is just what they are doing: hiring some underprivileged foreign born girl to work for them twelve to fifteen hours a day for six or seven dollars a week, while they abandon their own to go out and take thirty five dollars a week for teaching other people's children. Between times they go around complaining that it is "so hard to get decent girls to take over their full time job of being a mother to their children for the starvation wages of six dollars a week."

Married school teachers are a contradiction in terms for all who have a fundamental grasp of the real values of life.

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

This story is told of St. Francis of Assisi concerning the crib of Christmas. A man of child-like faith and deep love for God, Francis felt that a very effective way of impressing on the minds of his followers the meaning of the Nativity was the actual reenactment of the scene of Christ's birth. To that end he called on one of his friends and had this to say to him:

"I want to celebrate the Holy Christmas night along with thee, and listen, how I have thought it out for myself. In the woods by the cloister thou mayest arrange a manger filled with hay. There must also be an ox and an ass, just as in Bethlehem. I want for once to celebrate seriously the coming of the Son of God upon earth and see with my own eyes how poor and miserable He wished to be for our sakes."

It was done as Francis desired. A stable was found, an ox and an ass were led inside, and on the manger Holy Mass was said so that the Little Child might be there as bodily as He was when first He came to the earth. Francis preached the sermon, and it is said that when he pronounced the word Bethlehem, he did so in such a way as to make it sound like the bleating of a lamb; and when he pronounced the name Jesus, he did so as though he were tasting something sweet.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

REMEDIES FOR DETRACTION

Let us now come to the remedies. He who has injured the character of another must not only confess the sin, but must also restore the good name that he has

**From:
Instructions
for the People**

taken away. In this there is great difficulty: it is easy to take away, but most difficult to restore, a good name.

When the defamation is effected by falsehood, the author of it is obliged to retract his calumny in the presence of all those before whom it was uttered; but this is the difficulty.

If the sin were true, but hidden, there is also, as I have already said, an obligation of restoring the injured character; and in this case there is still greater difficulty; for if the person really committed the sin, it cannot be said that he was innocent of it, for that would be a lie, and it is never lawful to tell a lie. What, then, is to be done? The detractor must use some other and more convenient means, some equivocation, for instance, such as: "It was only in joke — what I said of that man — I should not have said it." Sometimes it is better to speak well of the person whom you have caluminated without making any allusion to the sin you have told of him, particularly when you have reason to presume that this would be more pleasing to him than to revive the remembrance of his fault.

It is, however, necessary to know that it is not detraction, nor a sin, to tell a fault of another to his Superiors, parents, guardians,

or masters, that they may prevent evil to the public, or to an innocent person, or to the delinquent himself. For example, if a girl is familiar with a young man, or if a young man goes to a house of bad character, and you make it known to the father that he may apply a remedy, you are not guilty of sin. On the contrary, you are obliged to do this when it can be done without danger of any great harm to yourself. Nor is this, as I have said, detraction. St. Thomas says that to speak ill of another is sinful when it is done to blacken his character, but not when it is done to prevent his sin or injury.

Contumely.

The eighth commandment also forbids *contumely*. *Contumely* is an insult offered to a person in his presence. Detraction destroys the character of a neighbor; contumely takes away his honor. When contumely contains defamatory matter, it is a double sin, because it injures the honor as well as the good name of the neighbor.

Hence, as there is an obligation of restoring a neighbor's reputation, so there is also an obligation of repairing the injury done to his honor by asking his pardon, or by some other act of humility towards him.

When contumely is offered (and it may be offered either by acts or by words) in the presence of others, the reparation must be made before the same persons.

To open another's letter is a species of contumely, and therefore it is always a sin, unless there is a presumption that the person

who sends the letter or the person to whom it is sent is not unwilling that it be read.

It is also a sin to disclose, without a just cause, a secret which is entrusted to you or which you promise to keep. With regard to the just causes of revealing a secret, ask your confessor and follow his advice.

Is it a sin to entertain rash judgments? Yes; to judge rashly — a very great sin when the judgment is on an important matter, and really *rash*, that is, made without any reason, without certain grounds. But when there is any foundation for judging so, it is not a sin. To suspect evil of another without grounds is a venial sin; it scarcely amounts to a mortal sin unless when a person voluntarily and without any grounds suspects a neighbor of a most grievous sin. I have said *without any reason*; for when there is some foundation for the suspicion there is no sin. However, the virtuous always think well and the wicked think badly of their neighbors. *The fool . . . whereas he himself is a fool, esteemeth all men fools.*

* * *

We have treated of the eighth commandment; the ninth and tenth commandments which forbid Christians to covet the goods and the wife of another, remain to be explained. But in the sixth commandment we have spoken of the sin of impurity, and in the seventh of the sin of theft. By the ninth and tenth are forbidden only the desire of these sins. Hence it is sufficient to say that what it is a sin to do it is also a sin to desire.

The Six Principal Commandments of the Church in Verse.

1. Sundays and holy days observe
As feasts of obligation;
Attend at Holy Mass, and keep
From servile occupation.
2. Lent, Ember-days, and Vigils,
fast,
With one meal and collation.
3. On Friday, meat thou must not
eat,
For sake of Christ's dear
Passion.
4. Once in the year at least confess
With due examination.
At Easter-time receive thy Lord
With thanks and adoration.
5. In Lent or Advent marry not
With pomp and ostentation;
Wed before witnesses, and seek
The Church's approbation.
6. The worship of the Church
maintain
With generous contribution.

~ ~ ~
SPIRITUAL MAXIMS

Of what use will it be to gain the whole world and to lose one's soul? All may be lost, provided God is not lost.

No sin, however small, is a light evil.

If we desire to please God, we must deny ourselves.

All good consists in loving God. And loving God consists in doing His will.

Points of honor are the plague of spirituality.

He who thinks of hell which he has deserved, finds every trouble easy to bear.

Of what use are the riches and honors of the world at the hour of death?

No one can be lost who loves God and trusts in Him.

Let us beg God to give us a tender devotion to His Divine Mother.

Book Reviews

DOCTRINE

A Manual of Christian Doctrine, or, *The Triple Catechism*, in Three Parts. By Rev. Richard W. Grace. Joseph F. Wagner, New York.

Books reviewed here may be ordered through The Liguorian. These comments represent the honest opinion of the reviewers, with neither criticism nor deserving praise withheld.

It would be difficult to improve on the Baltimore Catechism that is used in so many schools by the Sisters, and in so many parlors by priests in the instructions given to converts. But we believe that Father Grace has approximated the work of the early American Fathers in his catechism, in the clearness of his exposition and the thoroughness of his explanations. While every catechism must have as its first requisite, orthodoxy, still, much depends as far as the actual imparting of knowledge is concerned on the mind and ways of thought of the teacher. While some teachers can use one type of catechism with profit, others cannot use such a type at all. Father Grace's three thin volumes can be used by all. Each one follows the topical method of explanation. In every chapter there is a series of questions concerning the dogma of the faith, or an article of the creed. These questions are only "leads." They could be entirely eliminated and the answers would form a clear and logical explanation of the doctrine that is being discussed. In fact each chapter is a short sermon. Thus the catechism is an invaluable aid to priests in the work of writing sermons for any occasion in the year. Scripture and reason are used freely to prove the divinity of our holy religion, but in such a way that even the child can understand. Authorities on Catechetics have praised Father Grace's work very highly. — E. F. M.

Introduction to Catholicism. By Martin J. Scott, S.J., Litt.D. Published by Kenedy. 107 pages. Price, paper, \$0.25; cloth, \$1.50.

Father Scott may well be called the plain man's apologist. He has an extraordinary ability to express in simple language both the motives for believing and the essential doctrines of the Catholic faith. Now, added to the sizable list of his popular books dealing with

the Catholic Church from various angles, comes this new handbook which a non-Catholic may read for himself or a priest use as a guide in giving instructions. It is

divided into two parts. The first part consists of nine short chapters on the fundamental truths that support the claims of the Catholic Church to be divine. While the chapters are short, they are pointed and clear; good sound common sense such as every ordinary plain man prides himself in is used to point out the inexorable logic of the position of the Church. The second part of the book consists of a succinct question and answer catechism, with a few words of comment after each chapter. A course of instructions based on this succinct catechism would be very thorough. We happily welcome this new handbook of apologetics and predict that pastors will find it eminently useful in their convert work. — D. F. M.

Practical Charity. By Sister Mary Agnes, S.N.D. Published by Kenedy. 61 pages. Cloth bound, 75 cents.

This is the second little volume of meditative essays on the Pauline texts regarding charity, from the pen of Sister Mary Agnes. In the first she dealt with "St. Paul's Hymn of Charity"—the famous 13th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. In this she takes as text St. Paul's various directions regarding the practice of charity to be found in his epistle to the Romans. For all who realize the inescapable truth that faults against charity are often the greatest and last obstacles a soul must surmount before approaching sanctity, these brief meditations will be invaluable. St. Paul missed nothing in instructing the Romans about the practice of charity, and Sister Agnes merely points out how thoroughgoing he was by revealing hidden meanings in many of his axiomatic phrases. A good booklet for a whole month's meditations, or for a daily examination of conscience during a retreat. — D. F. M.

Freedom. Two Volumes of Sermons Preached by Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen over the Catholic Hour. Part I: Social Free-

dom. 73 pages. Price, 15 cents each; 5 or more copies at 10 cents per copy; \$8.00 per hundred. Part II: Personal Freedom. 90 pages. Price, 20 cents each; 5 copies or more, 15 cents each; \$11.00 per hundred. Published by Our Sunday Visitor Press.

Easily and cheaply available now for wide distribution are these two series of important sermons preached by Msgr. Sheen in 1939. The first series deals directly with the topics of true and false liberty, economic guarantees of liberty, communism, capitalism, property, labor and government in regard to liberty. They will be found a splendid general commentary, in popular style, on the great labor encyclicals. The second series consists of the sermons on the seven capital sins, each one of which is a bar to individual and personal liberty.—*D. F. M.*

ASCETICISM

Spiritual Reflections for Sisters. By Rev. Chas. J. Mullaly, S.J. Apostleship of Prayer Press, 515 East Fordham Road, N. Y. Pages 80. Price, \$0.35; \$3.60 a dozen.

There is a plethora of books on the market today dealing with the religious life as it specifically touches the daily life of Sisters. Many of these books, we regret to say, are of small value. They are the pious reflections of little minds and add nothing to an ascetical literature that can so easily bog down (and in many instances actually does) into pious platitudes. But Father Mullaly's brochure does not fall into this category. It has the saving grace of joining moral suasion with explanations of and reasons for the duties of the religious life. And it is written not only in a sprightly and what we might call "American" way (calculated to gain the interest of American girls in the convent) but it has for its subject matter topics that are most important in the business of becoming saints. Witness for example some of the chapter headings: The Mission of the Sister. Zeal for Souls. On Completing the Novitiate. Preserving Religious Discipline. Generosity. Prudence. Human Respect. Dealing with the Poor. Physical Suffering. Renewing Fervor. Convent Charity. Duties of Office. Gossip. Fault-Finding. Refinement. Detachment. Perseverance.—These are but some of the topics in this interesting book. They afford sufficient matter for more than

one meditation which will have a practical bearing on the daily life of the Sister. The author shows a deep knowledge of the spiritual life, and a clear understanding of the ways of nuns.—*E. F. M.*

The Art of Living with God. By the Most Rev. Joseph F. Busch, D.D. Published by Benziger Bros., New York. Price, 50 cents.

Another of the series known as "Catholic Knowledge." It is a real gem of a book. The subject, a popular description of the workings of the Holy Ghost in the human soul, is a deep one but one of which too little is known by our Catholic people and which too often is neglected in instructions and sermons. "The Art of Living with God," then, supplies a very definite need and is so well written that too much cannot be said in its praise. It is to be highly recommended to all classes of readers.—*E. A. M.*

FICTION

The Dark Wheel. By S. M. C. 214 pp. Published by Kenedy, N. Y. Price, \$2.00.

Readers who enjoyed S. M. C.'s first novel "Brother Petroc's Return" will find equal enjoyment in her latest work. The laws of time are again temporarily abrogated for the purposes of the story, but whereas in the former book a monk from the Middle Ages was made to live for a time in the present, in "The Dark Wheel" the hero, for the good of his soul, is projected back into the middle 16th century, where he participates in the lives of some Catholics of that period as they secretly performed their Catholic duties, and finally witnesses the execution of the martyr Cuthbert Mayne.

The author writes with both charm and penetration; any one less skillful writing on such a subject might easily have produced nothing more than a "pious novel." As it is, the process of Greville White's conversion is almost more fascinating than the succession of strange settings and circumstances in which he finds himself. Perhaps S. M. C. will find herself in time equal to a really profound novel on contemporary life, without having to resort to the bizarre and startling in order to secure attention and interest.

Meantime, we recommend "The Dark Wheel" to anyone who is looking for a good Catholic novel.—*L. G. M.*



Catholic Comment



Have you noticed the almost disappointed manner in which reporters and news commentators talk about the inactivity of the armies involved in the great war? One would think, at times, that the bystanders are being cheated; they are like people who have gone to a theater to see a famous spectacle only to be told that "the curtain will not rise tonight." Two things are responsible for this, and neither one is a tribute to our civilization and culture. On the one hand the newspaper man is brought up on the theory that news must be startling, it must hit the reader between the eyes, it must be so exciting as to force people to read (so that they will be sure to see the advertisements that pay the bills for the paper.) With everything set for a screaming headline: "50,000 killed in huge battle," it seems a shame to the newspaper man that nothing happens except a skirmish or two between scouting parties or reconnaissance planes. On the other hand, there is still plenty of untamed savagery in the heart of the general public, which makes it crowd around the scenes of murder or suicide, and eagerly read the details of almost any kind of horrifying event. It would be a good idea, we think, if every news story about the armies on the western front were to begin with something like this: "Thank God, things were quiet in the war zones today." Or to train reporters to provide headlines like this: "Not one soldier killed on twenty-five mile front Wednesday." Perhaps, though we doubt it, we can get over our love for the morbid and the bloody in some such way.



Despite the "quietness" of the war regions, we cannot escape a deep feeling of thankfulness and joy, as we travel throughout the United States and compare what we see with what we know is going on in Europe. Here there are no black-outs; no curtailments of diet or clothing or house furnishings; no restrictions on travel; no gas masks or bomb-proof dug-outs; no parading soldiers; no separation of families by the evacuation of cities; no drone of warplanes or booming of cannons or anti-aircraft batteries either in practice or in actual combat; no conversion of factories into munitions producers. Here life goes on normally, peacefully, joyfully. Christmas will come, we pray, with this condition of peace remaining. And who is there who will not be praying that it will remain, no matter what happens in those countries where men have wandered so far from Christ that they have become either dulled to all His teachings or bitterly antagonistic because He stands against their selfish lust and ambition? The United States is at peace because even though there are millions here who profess no belief in Christ, they have not been able to escape the influence of His words and His deeds. Perhaps the war among other nations will teach our own that it is its Christianity that saves it and thus bring thousands of people to accept Christ in spirit and in truth.



A unique and powerful association is that which has been formed by Rev. Richard Felfx, O.S.B., in Pilot Grove, Missouri, whose headquarters have recently been changed to Conception, Missouri. Its name is *Defenders of the Faith*

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and its purpose is fourfold: 1) to defend the Church against all who malign her; 2) to explain the Faith to all who misunderstand it; 3) to bring Catholic truth to the non-Catholic mind everywhere; 4) to make all men know and love God. There is something almost childlike in the simplicity and all-inclusiveness of these aims; yet the volume of activity sponsored by the association is something to make one marvel. At present it has a program on twenty-six radio stations scattered throughout the land, called the Highway to Heaven series, running once a week for six months on each station. Each broadcast is a dialogue between a priest and a young man and young woman on some problem of life. The association sends out 60,000 leaflets every week, bearing a message under the heading "Why?" Seventy-five such leaflets have been published. During the past year over 4,000,000 pieces of literature have been sent out by the *Defenders of the Faith*. All this has been done by means of contributions from voluntary members, including many leaders of the hierarchy. It is one of the best conceived plans in America for utilizing all means of publicity in defense of the faith. The address is "Defenders of the Faith," Conception, Missouri.



In an age when social service, with its red tape, its probing into the secret history of the needy, its corporation-like anonymity, its well-paid efficiency experts, seems to have little relation to Christian charity, it is good to read of places like "St. Christopher's Inn," a bidding spot for vagrants and homeless men conducted by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement at Graymoor in Garrison, New York. In 1938, more than 170,000 meals were served to transients, and 52,000 men were provided with beds for the night. The Inn defies all rules of modern social service. No case histories are ever taken when tramps stop for food or shelter. The only information that is asked for is the man's name and the name of his nearest relative so that in case of death the latter may be notified. If he wants to stay on he may do so, but is asked to help in whatever work is going on at the time. If he does this he is provided with shoes and clothing, food and tobacco, and even ample facilities for recreation and amusement. The original buildings were constructed almost entirely by the homeless men who stopped there, unemployed carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, plasterers, mechanics, etc., all taking a hand. A new building is under construction at present, designed to add room for 300 men over and above the 200 that can be sheltered now.



And so—on to the New Year. The year 1939 will soon be packed away among the historical records that shall await reopening when all nations and peoples stand in the valley of Josephat, and each man and woman sees himself and others as they really were, year by year, day by day, thought by thought, deed by deed. The dead year may have provided many things of which one need not be afraid—but no doubt it has had its seamy side as well. It is already time to think about making 1940 a year that will, with the grace of God, have no seamy side—one in which every mistake of the past will have been buried forever in the merciful forgiveness of God, and then corrected before man. For the years are swift, and when they have passed they seem only like so many days or so many hours. Then comes the night in which no man can work, in which there will be no new years for new resolves and new achievements. Therefore, what we must do, we must do now.

Lucid Intervals

"How come you don't go with Toots any more?"

"Oh! I couldn't stand her vulgar laughter."

"I never noticed it."

"You weren't there when I proposed."

*

Ike (To very much disheveled friend): You look like you have been through an explosion.

Mike: I have. I just tried this recipe.

Ike: I don't see anything wrong with it. It says to add baking powder and beat.

Mike: Oh I see now. I didn't have my glasses on, and I thought it said add blasting powder and beat.

*

A woman entered an English bank to make a deposit. She procured a deposit slip which required the listing of bills, specie, and checks.

She listed her bills and checks in their respective places, but was in doubt what to list under specie.

After a few moments' thought she wrote after the word specie, "Female," and handed in her deposit.

*

The teacher was trying to impress upon her young pupils in the tenement district the importance of being original. She illustrated by saying:

"Mickey, repeat these sentences in your own words: 'I see a cow. The cow is pretty. The cow can run.'"

Mickey said: "Boy, lamp de cow. Ain't she a honey! An' I ask you, kin she take it on de lam?"

*

Mrs. Van Gorder had got a new maid and, among other things, the mistress gave orders to have a glass of milk brought to her bedroom every evening at 9 o'clock.

The first time the maid brought the milk in a glass, which she carried in her hand, and her mistress stormed:

"That's very crude! The next time bring my milk in on a tray."

The next evening the maid appeared with a tray full of milk in her hands, and inquired, "Do you want a spoon, ma'am, or will you lap it up?"

The visiting team's clean-up man stood in the batter's box. The bases were loaded.

"Ball one, high!" the voice of authority boomed.

"Ball two, low!"

"Ball three, inside!"

"Ball fo, low and wide—you is out!"

"How does you talk, Mister Ump? Ah gets a base fo' dat!" screamed the mutinous batsman.

"Brother, you is right—but de bases am loaded an' ah ain't got no place to put you. You is out!"

*

Old Lady (to street car motorman): "Please, Mr. Motorman, will I get a shock if I step on the track?"

Motorman: "No, lady, not unless you put your other foot on the trolley wire."

*

Assistant: No, madam, we haven't had any for a long time.

Manager (overhearing): Oh, yes; we have it, madam. I will send to the warehouse and have some brought in for you. (Aside to assistant)—Never refuse anything. Send out for it.

As the lady went out laughing, the manager demanded: "What did she say?"

Assistant: She said we haven't had any rain lately.

*

A man driving along a country road saw the roof of a farm-house ablaze. He shouted wildly to the woman standing calmly in the doorway:

"Hey your house is on fire!"

"What?"

"Your house is on fire," a little louder.

"What? I'm a little deaf."

"Your house is on fire!" at the top of his lungs!

"Is that all?"

"Well, it's all I can think of right now."

*

She: "I know a woman who lived to the age of forty without learning to read and write. Then she met a man who made a scholar of her in two years."

He: "That's nothing! I know a man who was a scholar at forty, but he met a woman who made a fool of him in two days."

OUR ADVERTISERS

Advertising men tell us that they can make the public buy anything, if they are given enough opportunity and space to put their message across. No doubt many of us are victims of this power, when we provide ourselves with highly advertised products and pay not only for the product but for the advertising as well.

The Liguorian does no advertising, and therefore makes no extra demands on the pocketbooks of its readers. But it does depend largely upon the advertising that can be given it by its friends — those who have found it to be a cheering, enlightening, helpful influence in their lives and in their homes.

Christmas is a time when many of these friends do their best advertising. They either subscribe for their friends and thus earn thanks throughout the year; or at least they pass on their Christmas copy and suggest that the New Year's issues be obtained.

We shall count on that advertising from our friends this Christmas, and shall place gift cards in the first issues of subscriptions given to new friends.

Motion Picture Guide

THE PLEDGE: *I condemn indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion and to unite with all who protest against them. I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. As a member of the Legion of Decency, I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.*

The following films have been rated as unobjectionable by the board of reviewers:

Reviewed This Week

Mad Empress, The
Main Street Lawyer
Stranger from Texas

Previously Reviewed

Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, The
The
Adventures of the Masked Phantom
Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever
Angels Wash Their Faces, The
Arizona Kid
Babes in Arms
Bad Lands
Bad Little Angel
Beau Geste
Blondie Takes a Vacation
Buildup Drummond's Bride
Call a Messenger
Captain Fury
Career
Charlie Chan at Treasure Island
Chicken Wagon Family
Children of the Wild
Chip of the Flying "U"
Chump at Oxford, A
Colored Sunset
Confessions of a Nazi Spy
Conspiracy
Cowboy Quarterback, The
Danger Flight
Death of a Champion
Death Rides the Range
Desperate Trails
Disputed Passage
Dress Parade
Everybody's Hobby
Everything's on Ice
Feud of the Plains
Fighting Gringo
Fighting Renegade
Five Little Peppers and How They Grew
Flight at Midnight
Flying Deuces
Four Feathers

Gangster the Great
Goodbye, Mr. Chips
Gracie Allen Murder Case
Grand Jury's Secrets
Hardys Ride High, The
Hawaiian Nights
Hero for a Day
Hollywood Cavalcade
In Old Callente
In Old Monterey
Inside Information
Ireland's Border Line
Jeepers Creepers
Jones Family in Quick Millions
Juarez
Kansas Terrors, The
Kid Nightingale
Konga, the Wild Stallion
Land of Liberty
Laugh It Off
Law of the Pampas
Legion of Lost Flyers
Liane Kid
Man from Sundown, The
Man from Texas
Man Who Dared, The
Marshall of Mesa City
Meet Dr. Christian
Mickey the Kid
Mill on the Floor, The
Million Dollar Legs
Missing Evidence
Mountain Rhythm
Mutiny on the Blackhawk
Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase
New Frontier
Night Work
No Place to Go
Nurse Edith Cavell
Oklahoma Frontier
Oklahoma Terror
Our Neighbors—The Carters
Outpost of the Mounties
\$1,000 a Touchdown

Perpetual Sacrifice, The
Pride of the Blue Grass
Range War
Real Glory, The
Riders of the Black River
Riders of the Frontier
Ruler of the Seas
Sabotage
Saint in London
Second Fiddle
Seventeen
Should Husbands Work
Sky Patrol
Smuggled Cargo
Southward Ho!
Spirit of Culver
Stanley and Livingstone
Star Maker, The
Stop, Look and Love
Story of Alexander Graham Bell, The
Story of Vernon and Irene Castle, The
Straight Shooter
Stunt Pilot
Sued for Libel
Susannah of the Mounties
Swing That Cheer
Tarsan Finds a Son
Television Spy, The
They Asked For It
They Shall Have Music
Timber Stampede
Trapped in the Sky
Torchy Plays With Dynamite
20,000 Men a Year
U-Boat Twenty-Nine
Under-Pup, The
Unexpected Father
Wall Street Cowboy
West of Carson City
Western Caravans
What a Life
Wizard of Oz
Wyoming Outlaw
Young Mr. Lincoln

